

# Advice to Communicants

For necessary preparation, and profitable improvement of the great and comfortable Ordinance of the

## Lords Supper:

That therein true spiritual Communion with Christ may be obtained, and the eternal enjoyment of God Scaled.

By Robert Craghead Minister of the Gospel in *L. Derry*.

Acts 2. 42. *And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer.*

1 Cor, 11. 28. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

verse 31. *For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged.*

EDINBURGH,

Printed for William Dickie Book-seller in Glasgow, and are to be sold at his Shop in the Salt-market, 1695.



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To the Right Honourable,  
**The Lord Provost,**  
**The Bailiffs, The Dean of**  
**Gild, The Deacon Con-**  
**veener; and remnant Mem-**  
**bers of the Council of the**  
**City of Glasgow, &c.**  
**And all the Inhabitants**  
**thereof.**



*He unquestionable duty of all men, who cannot pay just Debt, is at least to acknowledge it; specially where the Debt is so great that the Debtor is not responsible: when I remember the good hand of God upon me, in bringing me to such a refuge as Glasgow; through so many difficulties and dangers; having stayed in Derry until the second day of its*

its Siege, could not get out of the Gates without great difficulty, and forced to leave the half of my Family within the Walls, by the violence of Souldiers; and the next day was taken and Robbed by the Enemies: yet coming unto you in grief, for the lamentable State of this Nation, and particular relations: found no less affectionat tenderness and care, than if I had come among so many near Relations, being suffered to want nothing necessary for this life. Many others also of this Nation do, and have reason to remember gratefully your labour of love, in their destitute condition; I can see no reason, why such seasonable compassions should be buried in oblivion; but rather should be published according to many Scriptural precedents; rendering fragrant, and perpetuating the memory of such Christian Sympathy. And though in point of modesty, some find it difficult to commend Benefactors to their face, yet find no less difficult to be ungrate. Your friendly reception of me at first was not all, for after ye were pleased to call me for a season, to labour in Gospel-work, your acceptance of my poor labours was yet a greater comfort; and the testimonies I  
had

had of affection from Magistrats, Ministers, and People, were really surprising, being conferred on so worthless a Creature: and that which added yet more to render my lot comfortable at that time, was the exemplary conversation of many Christians, whose knowledge and experience in godliness was such, as gave occasion for my own edification every day.

Pardon this confidence of perfixing your honourable Names to so mean a Work; which I the rather hope to obtain, because experience of your former indulgence, hath made me thus presume, to hope for acceptance of an affectionat and obliged testimony of gratitude; though it be but as a mite, where so many Talents are due.

And that ye may continue of one heart and way, exemplary as hitherto, in appearing for, and promoting the Kingdom of Christ, that your labour of love may be fruit abounding to your account, that the Countenance of God may be lifted up, and his face shine on your assemblies, and that

that upon all the glory a defence may be  
created, to continue from generation  
to generation, is the desire of

Right Honourable,

Your obliged Servant

in the Lord

ROB: CRAGHEAD.

L. Derry,

Feb. 26. 169 $\frac{1}{2}$

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TO



TO THE  
Christian Reader :

**R**EASON requireth, that the  
ensueing Discourse ap-  
pear with an Apology in  
the entry, for troubling  
the World with anything  
new on the Lords Supper,  
by so unpolished a Pen;  
after so many elaborate, and profitable  
Treatises on this subject, but for thy satis-  
faction know : that though I presume not  
to offer any thing near so excellent as o-  
thers, yet having occasion to converse with  
many in soul-distress, on the account of the  
Lords Supper; some doubting if they should  
Partake, others troubled because they did  
Partake; and some afflicted because they  
[ a ] did

did not Partake: Finding also some objections from their own mouths that have not been usual, and because they have not occurred to others, are therefore not discussed, by such as have written Learnedly and Piously on this Sacrament: and being peculiarly concerned with some who are thus troubled; found it Duty to endeavour their relief, by a few particular instructions: not presuming a Treatise on the Lords Supper; so Divine and profound a Subject as giveth work sufficient (if not more) to the most able and choice of men, if all things be considered, that natively belong to the Ordinance. The Lords Supper is a large and fertile Field, where diligent Reapers may yet find more and more for the gathering, both for the comfort of Believers, and Seasonable warning to the presumptuous.

As for Believers, First, There is an appointed meeting between Christ and them: the desire of all Nations is there to be received, He who is our all, the one pearl for which when the richest of men sell their Earthly all, yet have him freely, and for nothing: the light and glory of Heaven com-

eth down to us, to be the hope of Glory in us, He cometh with Garments rolled in Blood; to make us know what we cost him; and through these Garments, Eternal, and overcoming love shineth, warmth, and attracteth the hearts of Believers. 2. Christ cometh in this Ordinance, to give Believers a hearty taste, of that intimate Communion which shall hereafter be the fulness of their joy, their Crown, and their Glory: and though now they see him but darkly, yet they know it to be himself, and not another; and when he and they shall meet again in another manner, when he shall come to receive them without a Vail on his glorious Face, they shall know it's the same blessed Face which they beheld before, but as in a Glass. How sweet to think on that meeting with Hope? Where the hope is sure, as an Anchor already entred within the vail: at the first Celebration Christ willed the Communicants to raise up their hearts, to the Meditations, and joyful Expectations of that blessed Communion to come, by putting them in mind, that he and they shall drink together of the new Wine in his Fathers

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Kingdom. 3. Believers admitted to true Communion with him in this Ordinance, receive with himself; grace to love his fellowship, grace to hate what offereth to separate, grace to love the means of its continuance, grace to long for its perfection: when he who is full of grace and truth comes near to a poor sinner, the savour of his Oynments goeth to the poor mans heart, Christ bringeth him near, not that he may look at him, and get nothing, but look and be saved, behold and be transformed into the same image, eat and be satisfied: Christ's fulness of Grace overfloweth, yielding showers of Blessings to the dry and parched Ground; we cannot so much as touch him by Faith, but vertue proceedeth for healing the poor sinner. 4. Here also is the Seal of Christ's Testament, securing the Believer he shal be preserved unto the Heavenly Kingdom, and be forever with the Lord: he hath given himself to them, and they have received him; Therefore now no Sin, no Death, no Devil, no ensnaring World, nothing present or to come, shall separate from his Love. The believing Receiver



seiver may, and should conclude this, because the honour and regard that is due to Christ's Seal, and therefore together with dependance on the Spirits sealing, the Believer is not to be idle, waiting only if assurance will drop down upon him, but is to endeavour the assuring of his own heart by the Seal of God.

On the other hand, the danger is great, if this Ordinance be profaned: for the more of Christ's Love shine in any Ordinance, & the nearer he cometh with the offers of his Love, the more heinous is the profanation: Now of all Gospel Ordinances, Christ offereth to come nearest to us in the Lords Supper; preaching is to bring us near to Christ; but in the Lords Supper the Believer directly acteth Communion with Christ: and therefore this Ordinance doth in a peculiar manner bear this name of Communion. There is no cause then of judging it great severity, when it's said he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation or Judgement to himself: some are ready to say, these

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were

were monsters of men, who imbrued their vile hands in that precious Blood, & they would not have been guilty of it for all the Kingdoms of the Earth; who yet forget that the Lord chargeth the same guilt on themselves, for profaneing that holy Ordinance being thereby guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

The danger of this hath made me insist the more largely on that head of Self-examination before partaking at the Lords Table; which perhaps some may think tedious, but if it may conduce as a mean, to prevent the guilt of one poor soul I shall not think any pains too much: as for others who find no need of, or many and particular Examinations, they may pass them by, and leave them to others.

Some may be apt to Object the same against so long discoursing on Communion with God: but whosoever Objecteth this, let him Consider. First, That Communion with Christ is the very Text and Subject in hand. 2. If Men know nothing of the Nature and Way of Communion  
with

with God ; how shall they seek after it in the Sacrament. 3. If true Communion with Christ be obtained at the Lord's Table, then it ought to be Cherished and Entertained in a Believers Walk, for Christ being Received we are to Walk in Him : It were great Ignorance if not Ir-religious profaneness, to say that Communion with Christ being Obtained at His Table, we are to be no more concerned with it until the next Communion ; for such as are of this Opinion have just cause of Fear they never yet had Communion with Christ any where. 4 The very Happiness of men consisting in Communion with God, this being the Believers only help and Comfort, & it's interruptions his great loss, grief & disquiet, finding that without it he is as nothing, & for nothing but evil, I therefore wish this little hint of it may be serviceable were it for no more, but to excite others better Qualified, & Blessed with more experience, to write on this Subject of Communion with God by it self, in a more full and particular manner than I have yet seen, or such a weak Person as I am able to perform.

Some also will probably Object against the many Objections here Published, especially these Temptations mentioned, that it might be Prudence rather to conceal some of them, To which I answered. First, That many Horrid Temptations are Recorded in the Holy Scriptures, as also the Mercy of God's delivering from them Published to His Glory; Therefore His Gracious support under such Temptations, and granting frequently a Comfortable Victorie is not to be concealed. 2. It's necessary that People be Warned and Armed for the worst of Temptations, that so they may be fixed by the Armour of God, before they be assaulted. 3. Many conceal their Temptations too long, until they are ready to sink, and are still silent for this very Reason; that they hear so little of the Temptations of others, and therefore think there is no sorrow like theirs, which addeth to their Affliction, whereas some particular Instructions Pertinent to their distressed Case, & ready at hand, might by the Blessing of God be Useful, especially in the beginning of their Temptations. 4. This requireth the more.

more Publick consideration, because such distressed Souls under grievous Temptations and Suggestions, are more Numerous than is commonly Apprehended: and these not only of our Perswasion, for I can give Instances of several sober Persons now living, and of another Perswasion Afflicted in like manner. 5. Let it be Considered, that there is nothing in the following Discourse for Indulging any manner of Temptations, but what is said is to resist them in a Christian manner.

The last thing I am to acquaint thee with, is, that this little Treatise being wholly practical, and designed only to for help to the weaker sort of Christians, it's stile is fitted for the meanest, for though Controversies cannot be Mannaged without words difficult to the Ignorant; yet it hath sometimes grieved Me to see some Excellent practical Books Thrown away by some Readers, for no other Reason, but that the Words were above their reach; which I Humbly Conceive should be conscientiously prevented, for knowing Readers  
can

can understand the plainest, but the Ignorant cannot understand words for which they had no Education.

That this Essay, notwithstanding it's Manifold Imperfections, may Obtain thy candid reception, and that it may prove by the Blessing of God in some Measure Servicable to thy Souls great Interest is the desire of

Thy Souls well wisher  
and Servant, for  
Christ's sake.

R. C.



C H A P. I.

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various offices of the County of New York, for the year ending December 31st, 1900.

**Judicial Department.**

**Clerk of the Court.**—*[Name]*

**County Clerk.**—*[Name]*

**Recorder of Deeds.**—*[Name]*

**Register of Probate.**—*[Name]*

**Surrogate.**—*[Name]*

**Comptroller.**—*[Name]*

**Treasurer.**—*[Name]*

**Assessor.**—*[Name]*

**Inspector of Taxes.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Education.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Health.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Agriculture.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Labor.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Public Works.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Charities.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Social Services.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Mental Hygiene.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Prisons.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Hospitals.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Asylums.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Cemeteries.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Parks.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Zoos.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Botanical Gardens.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Libraries.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Museums.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Art Galleries.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Theaters.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Music Halls.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Circuses.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Fairs.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Amusement Parks.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Race Tracks.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Casinoes.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Hotels.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Restaurants.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Bars.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Night Clubs.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Casinos.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Gambling Houses.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Prostitution.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Vice.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Immorality.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Crime.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Lawlessness.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Disorderly Conduct.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Public Nuisances.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Obnoxious Structures.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Unsanitary Places.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Filthy Streets.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Dirty Alleys.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Stinking Ponds.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Polluted Rivers.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Contaminated Air.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Noisy Factories.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Loud Parties.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Drunken Brawls.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Riotous Assemblies.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Unlawful Gatherings.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Illegal Meetings.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Subversive Activities.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Treasonable Acts.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Seditious Speeches.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Defamatory Statements.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Libelous Publications.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Slandering Articles.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Calumnious Reports.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of False Accusations.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Base Insults.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Coarse Language.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Vulgar Expressions.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Offensive Gestures.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Repulsive Smells.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Disgusting Sounds.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Revolting Thoughts.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Heinous Crimes.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Atrocious Acts.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Barbaric Practices.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Cruel Experiments.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Painful Torments.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Mutilating Operations.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Degrading Treatments.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Humiliating Procedures.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Dishonorable Actions.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Shameful Behaviors.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Infamous Deeds.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of Heinous Offenses.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of heinous crimes.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of atrocious acts.**—*[Name]*

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**Commissioner of cruel experiments.**—*[Name]*

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**Commissioner of painful torments.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of mutilating operations.**—*[Name]*

**Commissioner of degrading treatments.**—*[Name]*

**Commission**

in answer to the psalmist, but the law  
of the Lord is the perfect law, and the  
law of the Lord is the perfect law.

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## C H A P. I.

## I Corinthians 10. 16.

*The Cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ, the Bread which we break is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?*



ommunion with God is justly the wonder of all that obtain it, who can do little more while here but wonder, not understanding it's value, untill the shaddows flee away, and they see His Face in a greater brightness; This dignity and mercy must be exceeding great, seing the blood of him who is

God was shed for it's Purchase, *The just suffering for the unjust, to bring us to God, 1 Pet. 3. 18.* But when his servants shal serve him, and see his Face, and thereby themselves be made to shine in their Fathers Kingdom, then shal the glory of that love which contrived, and the glory of that love which purchased this Communion, be celebrated in another manner: Yet this Communion being begun on earth, we must according to the measure given, aim at the celebration of the glory of this love, in the manner required by himself, who hath instituted this Sacrament of the Lords Supper for a memorial of his love, in humbling himself unto death; requiring this his death to be shewed forth until he come again, and allowing his people such Communion with himself in this Ordinance, as shal be to them a Seal for their eternal Enjoyment of him, when he cometh again to receive them to himself.

The Blessings of this Ordinance are so great; that it's our mercy we have it's institution; it's several Parts, the signification of each Part, the Manner of acting on each part, & the Benefits to the believing Receiver. All particularly recorded. And in the words of this Text we have all these blessings summed up in our obtaining Communion with Christ, for he being ours, all is ours.

The Connexion of this ~~verse~~ with the words immediately proceeding is not so very obvious, as the Scope will make it appear, for what end the Lords Supper is here mentioned.

The Apostle is giving seasonable warning to these believing *Corinthians*, now eminent for Gifts, to take heed lest they fall, *verse* 12. For which end he gives them to understand that the people of God of old, were privileged above all other People, with signal testimonies of Gods peculiar favour, *they were under the cloud*, miraculously carried through the red sea, did eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink: And all these mercies by Christ the Rock that followed them; Yet with many of them God was not well pleased: And among other evils whereby God was provoked, their early Idolatry was most provoking: Therefore saith the Apostle, *flee from Idolatry*, ver. 14. and proposeth this Text as an Argument against Participation with Idolaters, in their idolatrous service; For saith he ye have solemnly professed Christ, and Communion with him, in the Sacrament of his Supper; and therefore must renounce all Worship, that's inconsistent with the said Profession, and Communion; such as the Sacrifices of the Gentiles being but Sacrifices of Devils, &c. *And ye cannot drink of the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of Devils*, ver. 21. Now that this Ordinance is such a solemn professed Communion with Christ, he asserteth as undeniable by this interrogation is it not, &c. Making the Affirmative strong, being such as themselves could not deny.

In the words we have these four things. First the general nature of this holy Sacrament, that is, the signs of Divine Institution, and the promised Blessing thereto Appertaining. Both the signs distinctly described, and both

both to be made use of by Believers. 3. The special and great benefit of Communion with Christ represented by these Symbols. 4. That in order to a Believers participation of Christs Body and Blood, these visible signs must be blessed and set apart for that holy use, the Apostle here beginneth with the Cup, where we are to consider four things, First what is understood by the Cup, Secondly, How it's called a Cup of Blessing, Thirdly, How it's said to be the Cup which we bless, Fourthly, That the Cup Blessed is the Communion of the blood of Christ.

For the First, the Cup signifieth the Wine in the Cup, and the Wine representeth Christs Blood; and therefore evidently a figurative speech, *Mat. 26. 27. And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament, &c. and Luke 22. 20. This Cup is the New Testament in my blood.* So that by the Cup is set forth the precious blood of Christ the price of our Redemption, *Ephes. 1. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, and 1 Cor. 6. 20. Ye are bought with a price.*

Secondly, It's the Cup of Blessing; being indeed a Cup of Salvation, full of blessings to the believing Receiver, being blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, *Eph. 1. 3. The cursed made blessed, & the guilty made righteous.* Next, It's the cup of Blessings or Praises, the word also signifying giving thanks, for hereby the blessings of many ready to perish come upon the Redeemer, who loved and gave himself for them.

Thirdly, It's the Cup which we bless, the cup must be blessed, and set apart for representing of that precious blood. Therefore we find that Christ blessed it; *He took the cup, and gave thanks;* the benefit of which is yet to be expected by Believers. Secondly, and his servants by Office, who in his Name administer this Ordinance, and give the Cup, pray for this blessing, and in his Name bless and set apart the Cup for this sacred use, that it may be to the partakers by Christs blessing the Communion of his Blood; which is,

The fourth thing to be considered. The Communion of his Blood: The word signifieth Common or Communica-

cable to others giving and receiving, as *1 Tim. 6. 18. wil-  
ling to Communicate*; It's the same word, So there is giv-  
ing on Christs part, and receiving by the Believer which  
is this Communion of his Blood; so the same word is  
translated fellowship, *1 Cor. 1. 9: You are called unto the  
fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.* Believers having  
most intimate fellowship with Christ, they in him, and  
Christ dwelling in their hearts by Faith, So the word is  
also translated Partaking, *2 Pet. 1. 4. That by these you might  
be partakers of the Divine nature,* that is to have Communi-  
on with the Divine nature: and possibly it had been as  
safe to have translated its Communion or Fellowship; as  
partaking, for some weak people have mistaken that Ex-  
pression ( partaking of the Divine nature ) and over-  
stretched it, to whom fellowship with the Divine Nature  
had been more plain, as the word is translated, *1 John 1:  
3. Our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.*  
The Cup here is said to be the Communion of his blood,  
that is the Cup being blessed according to Divine Institu-  
tion, and made use of by the believing Receiver, he par-  
takes of the benefit of Christ's blood, his Death and Pur-  
chase, he hath Communion with Christ crucified, his  
Death being for him, and in his stead; he is said to be  
crucified with Christ, *Gal. 2. 20: satisfying the Justice  
of God, in and by Christ crucified, and so hath the Com-  
munion of his blood.*

The next visible sign is the Bread, where these three  
things are to be noted, first, that it's bread, Secondly,  
Bread broken, and Thirdly, that this Bread broken is the  
Communion of Christs Body.

For the first Bread is made use of by our Redeemer, as  
that which is necessary for preserving the life of man, and  
therefore fit to signifie, and represent the Bread of life,  
Christ is our spiritual food, his flesh meat indeed *John  
6: 55: Secondly, It's not any bread but this bread blessed  
and set apart for this representation, Mat. 26: 26: As  
they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, Thirdly, af-  
ter it's blessed, it remaineth still bread, the Apostle doth  
not say the Body which we break, but the Bread which  
we break; now the Bread is not broken before, but after*

it's

it's blessed, *for he took bread and blessed it, and brake*, and the Apostle saith expressely it's Bread which is broken! but if after the blessing or consecration, the bread were transubstantiated into the natural Body of Christ, then the Apostle had said the Body which we break: sure the Apostle knew what name to give it, having received of the Lord what he delivereth, and what can be more plain, than that it's still Bread when it's broken, which is after it's consecration; this breaking of the bread is so material a part of the institution, that the whole of the Sacrament bears its name called the breaking of bread, *Acts 2. 42.* The breaking of Christs precious Body being thereby signified, Christ requireth this discerning of his Body, broken saying, *this is my body which is broken for you, 1. Cor. 11:24.* and the breaking of the bread must be Sacramentally, and publickly performed in sight of the Communicants, for their instruction, as in the first Celebration.

And in the last place, the sincere Believer in eating of this bread according to Christ's institution, doth by Faith receive himself, hath special Communion with him, and partakes the benefits and purchase made through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, *Heb: 10: 10:* This is the Sacrifice he came to give, when no other could do; and therefore it's memorial should be always fragrant.

Many pertinent Doctrines may be here observed, both from the scope and words of this Text, but I shal name only this one.

*Doct. The worthy receiver at the Lords Table hath Communion with Christ, in partaking the benefit of his precious blood, and broken Body.*

From this great and comfortable truth, these ten inferences following appear native, which shal be the subject matter, of the ensuing Discourse, First inference the celebration of the Lords Supper, being an holy transaction between Christ and Believers, wherein they have the Communion of his Body and blood, then the Doctrine of Christ concerning himself, what he is, what he hath done and suffered, should be firmly believed as a foundation for our partaking of this blessed Communion.

2. Inference, the Lords Supper being the Communion of Christs body and blood to the believer : then all who partake are obliged to prepare for so great a blessing, particularly to examine themselves before they eat.

3. This blessed Ordinance of Christ, being the Communion of his body and blood : Then Communicants are to approach it with a humble sense of their sin ; as needing the vertue of that precious blood.

4. The worthy Receiver obtaining the Communion of Christs body and blood. Then Communicants are obliged to understand what that is which is called Communion with Christ before they partake.

5. Seing such blessed & near Communion with Christ may be obtained at the Lords Table : then Communicants should prepare for entertaining communion with him in the very time of that Solemnity.

6. This blessed Ordinance of the Lords Supper, being the communion of Christs body and blood : then believers are obliged to have a sincere desire to partake of so great a mercy.

7. This holy Ordinance, being the Communion of Christ body and blood : Then believers should approach it, with Faith, and expectation of this blessed Communion with Christ.

8. Seing so great a benefit as the Communion of Christs body and blood, may be had in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper : Then Christians are obliged to endeavour the removal of all objections, and stumbling blocks that stand in the way, to obstruct their partaking of this benefit.

9. This holy Sacrament, being the Communion of Christs body and blood : Then after partaking, Communicants are obliged to try if they have obtained that blessed Communion.

10. This holy Ordinance, being the Communion of Christs body and blood : Then Communicants are obliged to live suitable to so great a benefit, and testifie their gratitude, by an holy walk and conversation.

## C H A P. II.

*The Doctrine of Christ Crucified, must be believed by Communicants.*

*The first Inference,*

**T**He celebration of the Lords Supper, being an holy transaction between Christ and Believers; wherein they have the Communion of his body and blood, then the Doctrine of Christ concerning himself, what he is, what he hath done, and suffered, should be firmly believed, as a foundation for our partaking of this blessed Communion.

For if the Doctrine unto which this Sacrament belongeth, and whereupon it dependeth, be doubted, such also will our partaking be, not in faith, but doubting; therefore all concerned, who have a due value for their Souls, are to labour for fixedness, in the great Gospel truths concerning Christ, and the way of obtaining Communion with him. I shal God willing make this appear, in this Chapter, and conclude it with a few words of advice to such Communicants as have most need of greater establishment in the truth.

Consider first, that mens professing of Gospel truths is not sufficient proof, that they believe these truths; for many profess that which they do not believe, having no firm perswasion of these truths, in their own minds; but stand yet in need of being taught, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, even after such profession, and opportunities of knowledge, that they might have been teachers of others, Heb. 5, 12.

2. Nor is want of doubts concerning these truths, sufficient evidence, that they are firmly believed, for the want of doubts doth not always proceed from fixedness in Faith, but sometimes from being unconcerned, whether the Doctrine be true or false, not being so serious, as either to believe, or doubt.

3. Nor is it sufficient, that people have an implicate Faith

Faith in what concerneth their Salvation, because their teachers instruct them so, and they so receive, having nothing against it: because men may be easily shaken out of that sort of Faith; and therefore we are to receive the Doctrine of Christ, *1 Thes. 2: 13* not as the word of man, (but as it is in truth) the word of God. Particularly, first if we do not believe there was and is a Christ, we cannot converse with him, for who can seek Communion with one of whose very being they doubt? Would to God all professed Christians, believed in heart firmly; that there is a Christ, as our merciful God, hath given us full evidence for our belief. 2. If we do not believe that he is God and man, God manifest in the flesh, we cannot have Communion with him, as such, and if we have not Communion with him as such, then we have not Communion with the true Christ, the Mediator and sent Saviour of the World. 3. If we do not believe, that he really died, then we can have no Communion of his Body and Blood, Not believing that his Blood was shed. 4. If we do not believe that this his Death, and offering himself a Sacrifice to the justice of God, for these who were given him of his Father, was accepted of God, then we cannot lay the burden of our sins upon and trust our Souls to that Sacrifice. 5. If we do not believe, that God hath provided a way for our partaking of that Sacrifice, and the benefits thereby purchased; then we cannot believe a Participation and Fellowship of his Sufferings. 6. And if we know nothing of that appointed way, *viz.* by Faith then we cannot make application of his Death, and so shall not have the Communion of his Body and Blood. And that the necessity of firm believing the Doctrine of Christ may appear, Consider;

First, that we may see with grief, how many turn Apostates, Athiests, & Blasphemers, who were professed Christians, and appeared to have no doubt of what they professed, for many years, yet by frequent Apostacy mens Souls are ruined, Religion reproached, & Satans kingdom advanced.

2. It's found also, that others of a better stamp, who do not precipitate themselves into such Gulfs of Apostacy, improving the benefit of a good Education, their practice



practice being in some measure according to their knowledge: yet in progress of years, when they come to be more deeply concerned with their eternal state, and to know on what grounds they can warrantably expect to be no worse, but better, when this life hath its period; searching into these grounds, do often find such difficulties to believe the truths whereof they doubted nothing in their younger years, that their souls are cast into deep disquiet, and sometimes are made to bless God who hath kept them alive, and under means of knowledge, that they may yet be confirmed in some important truths, which nearly concern their very Salvation. And notwithstanding that conscientious Christians, are cautious and sparing in uttering their Doubts, specially, when they are such as might prove stumbling to others; Yet where the benefit of cordial Sympathy is obtained, many are found under distressing conflicts of this nature, in so much that if their gracious God, did not relieve, they could not stand long in their profession, but would be noticed to their grief as fainting: Such temptations have not yet left this World, *in vain, I have washed my hands in innocency*, Psal. 73. 13.

3. It's also too evidently found, that some by reason of not being fixed in the great Gospel truths concerning Christ, and Salvation, are retarded in their whole Christian progress; for the foundation not being firmly laid, they cannot go on to perfection, this is no charge against the foundation which God hath laid; for that is still sure and unmoveable, *1 Cor. 3. 11. For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* For which we are to bless God, but it's mens not being fixed upon, and cemented with the true foundation: and whether men will or not, this hath a Secret, strong influence to deaden all their religious practice, when they doubt but all their pains may be in vain at last, *and that they have been but beating the air*, *1 Cor. 9. 26.*

4. Some are assaulted with violent temptations, tempting them to doubt of many truths at once, and such as are of great consequence; and then their weakness appeareth, then they smart bitterly, for not being established in the truth,

truth, having no solid answer for repelling of such temptations, then they are tossed to and fro with any wind of Doctrine, yea, many woes are at hand, then they are ready to call good evil, and evil good, and put darkness for light, then they are ready to run down the stream, and yield all, were it not that God knoweth how to deliver his own out of temptation, 2 Pet. 2. 9.

5. Known instances may be given of some who in their day shined to the glory of God, and Edification of many, who yet not long before their great change found it their greatest tryal and difficulty, to be fixed in believing, even as to the object of their Faith: which should be remarked as a warning to weaker persons to spend more of our time and seriousness for rooting in the truth, *that we may know whom we have believed*, which was the Apostles great rejoicing, 2 Tim. 1. 12.

6. It's also to be observed, that especially at Communion Doubts do arise in many of the People of God, when they are examining their Faith, and Knowledge, and Satan always going about to resist good, labouring to obstruct the best works (whereof self-examination is one) instead of questioning their own weakness in knowledge, or slowness to believe, he tempteth them to doubt of the object of their Faith: and if not fixed they are at least so disturbed in their Souls, and cast down; that they have no confidence for going to the Lords Table: and supposing they were not afflicted with such temptations, yet if fundamentals Gospel-truths be not understood, nor a judicious assent of the mind yielded to them; then there can be no consent. An assent of the mind may be to the truth without consent, but we cannot chuse and consent to that which the mind doth not believe to be truth. So then you cannot consent to receive Christ at his Table, except ye believe the report and testimony that God hath given of him, 1 John 5. 10. Therefore spare no pains for knowledge, dig for it as for hid treasures, account the knowledge of Christ excellent knowledge, as others did who knew him better than you, who did look upon other things as but loss and dung, Phil. 3. 8. Thou hast none to know like him, nor any knowledge so necessary

easy as to know him, 1 Cor. 1. 30. Who is made of God unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, & Redemption, be not too easily satisfied with thy knowledge of Christ, as many in this age are: Let it be an exercise of thy Soul by it self, how to know Christ, lest thy first knowledge of him be as of a Judge to give out Sentence, Depart, I know you not: lay this to heart, though thou had not the Lords Table to go to, but if thou wilt go to it ignorant of him, ignorance it self will render thee an unworthy Communicant, as I fear it doth too many in our times, who yet cannot be judicially debarred; what if thy own conscience should rise upon thee when thou art going to his Table, and accuse thee of presumption, for attempting a Communion with him, to whom thou art a meer stranger, not so much as believing the record God hath given of his Son? Can such a person be accepted of him? Labour then to be acquainted with him in time, Job 22. 21. Acquaint thy self with him rendering praise to God, that thou has yet a season for it; and if thou dost not affect ignorance; but art one who longest for the knowledge of the Holy, fearing thou art the very person that has not that knowledge, Prov. 30. 3. Fearing the danger of thy Soul, were it for nothing else, but thy ignorance of Christ, fearing also to go to the Lords Table, on the same account, then Consider;

First, all the true knowledge thou canst have of Christ, and the Doctrine of Salvation by him, is supernatural, thou canst not dig it out of thy self, *None knoweth the Son, but he to whom it's revealed, Matth. 11. 27.* And when Peter giveth an account of his knowledge of Christ, he is told, *Matth. 16. 17. flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee:* Then thy work is to pray for this knowledge what ever other means thou use, thou must have it as a free Gift, 1 Joh. 5. 20. He hath given us an understanding to know him that is true, it's also given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom, *Matth. 13. 11.* despond not, though this day thou art very ignorant of Christ, and the mysteries of his Kingdom, it may be thou has too much depended on thy own understanding, and not prayed for a given understanding; the neglect of this keepeth many in

in ignorance, for though we sometimes grieve, because we are ignorant; yet we are naturally so proud, that we had rather have it of our selves, than take it as a free gift of God: but take his counsel, who saith, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally,* Jam. 1. 5. Blessed Jesus Christ is sent to open the eyes of the blind, *Isa. 42. 7.* Let him have his work beseech him to open thy eyes, he will not fail to perform what he came for, if thou wilt sincerely acknowledge thy blindness, remember what he saith, *John 9. 41.* if you were blind ye should have no sin, take it then as a great mercy to be sensible of thy blindness, it being the surest way to the best light.

2. Consider also that there are degrees, both of knowledge and faith, though thou come not up to the first Worthies, yet thou may'st be no unworthy Communicant if Christ has so manifested himself unto thee, that thou canst not live contentedly without him? If what thou hast discovered of him hath captivated thy Soul? If thou lovest all thou knowest of him? And followest on to know more? Though thou seest not him flying in that glorious brightness, that some did on the Mount, yet Christ will come and meet with thee waiting for him, though at the foot of the Mount, he will come down to thee, when thou canst not go up to him, and he will be as good as his word, in manifesting himself to all who love him, and keep his words, though he do not manifest himself in a like manner to all, we must be glad to see him though thorow a lates's; if so be we are sure it's he, the very Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world; any sure knowledge of him, any manner of his manifesting himself, should be highly valued, for where he manifesteth himself, there will he come and make an abode, *Joh. 14. 23.*

3. It deserveth a special remark, that though the Disciples continued long weak in their Knowledge, confessing their ignorance that they knew not the way, *John 14. 5,* and sometimes that they knew not what he said, *Joh. 16. 18.* And as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again, *Joh. 20. 9.* They were not so fully confirmed

confirmed as afterward, yet as to the state of their souls, Christ declareth them clean, *Joh. 15. 3.* and admitted them to his Table, yea, and giveth a comfortable account of them to his Father, *Joh. 17. 25.* and these have known, that thou hast sent me, and vers. 6. they have kept thy Word. O! the depth of his love, and faithfulness; First, to open the eyes of the blind, and reveal his Father unto them, and then though they see but darkly, to give this comfortable account of them, *father they have known*: What piercing eyes hath Christ, to observe the good, as well as the evil of his people, and to bring forth alittle of his own fine Gold from under vast rubbish, and make it shine before his Father, as fruit of the travel of his Soul. Let not the Reader mistake, in making a bad use of this, to his own hurt, in presuming without some competent knowledge: for by Christ's testimony it's evident, the Disciples had knowledge, only Christ's condescensions must not be concealed, in allowing his Table to such as were but weak; that others in succeeding generations grieved for their weakness, might not despond; since it is not the altogether perfect that Christ expecteth at this lower Table, but at the higher: where that unknown, that reserved new wine may be drunk without danger, *Matth. 26. 29.* I might here also add, that believers sometimes have a real knowledge of these Gospel mysteries, which themselves think they know not: As for instance, *Joh. 14. 4.* and *whither I go, ye know*: but in the next verse, *Thomas* denieth both, saying, *we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?* This contradicth what Christ had said, he saying *ye know*, and *Thomas* saying, *we know not*. Now what Christ said, is infallibly true, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man, *Joh. 2. 25.* And it was very ill manners in the good Man, to contradict his Master, and little better, than give him the lie in his face: Who would bear such things as meek Jesus doth! The man should have well pondered the words spoken by Christ, as certainly true, because he spake them, and should have rendered praise for his discovering that in himself, and others which they could not observe; and thereby

thereby allowing them comfort as to their knowledge : but as he, so some Christians yet take a sinful liberty, to deny the goodness of God to their souls, by a mismanaged, I will not say pretended kind of humility : when some reflect on their knowledge, and find it mixt with darkness, and indistinct; How ready are they to conclude, and say they have no knowledge : Whereas Christ may have other thoughts of them, for his thoughts are not their thoughts, *Isa. 55. 8.*

*Fifthly*, Yet by all means, study to grow in grace and knowledge, *the hand of the diligent maketh rich* : It's very observable, that some Christians are more obnoxious to doubts, than others, and find them a great hinderance to their Spiritual advancement; yet when they set themselves to Diligence, in observing Christs Works in them, and for them, and the sweet harmony betwixt his Word and Works, do often get their doubts cleared, their Fetters fall off, and then they run, and not weary, knowing they run not in vain : When the Disciples attend diligently to Christs Words, then they come to say cheerfully, *Now we believe, and are sure, Joh. 16. 30.*

*Sixthly*, Be diligent, to practise what ye know, *John 7. 17.* If any man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self. Harken carefully to this counsel, as thou wouldst be confirmed in the truth, for our not practising what we know clearly; provoketh God to give us no more light, since we improve not what we have.

### CH A P. 3.

*Self-examination required of all, before Partaking.*

**T**HE second inference, is, that the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, being the Communion of Christs Body and Blood to the believer; then all who partake, are obliged to prepare for so great a Blessing particularly, to examine themselves, before they eat.

I shall therefore, by the Lords help. First, Give some reasons, why this Examining a mans self, must not be

be omitted. 2. Answer some objections made against it.  
 3. Shew the manner, how it ought to be performed. And  
 in the last place, Point at these heads, wherein we are  
 chiefly to examine our selves, before we partake.

*For the First, The reasons, why every man should examine  
 before he eat, are these,*

*First, It's expressly Comanded, 1 Cor. 11. 28. Let a  
 man examine himself, and so let him eat.* Here is no ex-  
 ception of one by another, and therefore we should make  
 none. It's not said, let a poor ignorant man examine  
 himself, but men of knowledge need not; it's not said, let a  
 man examine himself, the first time he receives only, but  
 whensoever he is to eat, let him examine himself. There-  
 fore the neglect of this one Duty, will render a man guilty  
 before God, take care how ye enter the work, if ye go  
 out of the road in the beginning of the way, you shal not  
 easily know where to fall into it again.

2. The transaction betwixt Christ, and partakers of  
 the Lords Supper, is of the greatest importance for a mans  
 soul, for either he shal be guilty of the Body and Blood of  
 the Lord, by unworthy receiving, or be blessed with the  
 Seal of God for his eternal happiness; if he truly receive  
 Christ: Therefore, previous examination is most neces-  
 sary.

3 It's Gods great mercy to our souls, that he requir-  
 eth this Duty of examining our selves; and therefore  
 should not be lookt upon as a burden, but a mean for pre-  
 venting our ruine; for if after examination, you find  
 your selves in the bond of iniquity, and in the broad way  
 to the Pit; It's your mercy to know it, before you feel  
 it: Can you in cold blood, think it adviseable, that the  
 Pit be your first wakening! When the unquenchable  
 flames of Gods wrath are about you, are ye resolved to  
 understand the state of your soul no other way? Can this  
 be the way of Wisdom? Can you approve it? And if you  
 cannot in your own conscience approve it, but knows it  
 to be a sinful, and dangerous neglect: Why then will you  
 take a young Hell in your breast, to the old? Why do  
 you prepare such a gnawing Worm as this will be? That  
 here is a man, who never had so much regard to Heaven,

or fear of Hell, as to enquire, which of them he was going to.

On the other hand, if after examination, ye shal find any thing of true Grace, the least grain of that fine Gold tried in the Fire, though covered with much rubbish, if any love of Christ, and holiness; though but as a smoaking Flax: would not the comfort abundantly compensate thy pains, canst thou deny it? If Christ hath given thee grace, is it not worth the looking on, that thou mayest at least give him thanks for it? Search therefore diligently, for thou knowest not the many blessings that may attend a conscientious Examination, *Psal. 119. 59. I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies.*

4. We are naturally inclined to flatter our selves in our Iniquity, *Psal. 36. 2. He flattereth himself in his own eyes,* And if we could, to deceive and flatter God with our lips; And therefore are obliged to make a diligent search, lest we vainly think we stand in need of nothing, when we are wretched and naked, *Rev. 3. 17.*

We may think that we live, and have a name that we live, and yet God find us Dead, *Rev. 3. 1.*

What woe of woes, what a costly delusion to the poor Soul, if still among the Dead, and at last under the second Death, and the poor man has no more to say, but I thought I was alive in my Soul, and many others thought so of me? I thought that I might be as welcome to the Lords Table, as any Christian was there, I thought my self more upright than many of them, my heart said so to me, I many times thought their many Prayers, Whinnings, Groanings, Doubts, and examining themselves, was either but Hypocrisie, or vain Labour? But now iniquity hath found me out, cannot now have one hour for the Work I despised, night is come, I cannot now see how to work, Night is come without hope of a Morning: Be wise then, as to your latter End; for the time is at hand, when men will need no Examinations: you will be all at a point in a few Years, and eternally fixed in your Lot.

5. If people will not be at pains to examine themselves before a Communion, they will easily neglect it at other times,



times, and so are apt to live out of this Duty while they live; when men become so impudent as to face the Lords Table, not observing his Direction, and the manner how to approach it, the Direction being peremptory. But let a man examine himself: So that albeit there be a reluctance to this profitable Duty; yet this should constrain to it, as we would not profane the holy things of God: and when people make Conscience of it, though the Sacrament be in its own nature a confirming Ordinance; yet this previous examination hath been signally blessed of God, being the very time and mean of awakening many out of their secure sleep in their Sins. I know many at this day now exemplary in Holiness, who can declare that preparation for Communions in their younger years, was the very time their hearts were first engaged to Christ and his ways.

6. Some without due examination take up an opinion, that they have no grace, no Title to Christ, or his Tables; and so deprive themselves of that benefit: This opinion was not the result of serious Examination, but rather a temptation to obstruct both their Duty, and Mercy; and this becometh both a Sin, and snare to them, a Sin, because they have not followed Gods Directions in knowing the very state of their Souls, and a snare being thereby barred up from their spiritual good; therefore, this Self examination is most necessary every way.

*Notwithstanding of the many clear and ponderous Reasons for this examining before Partaking of the Lords Supper, yet some object against it; as,*

*First,* I know my souls condition so well already, that I am resolved not to Communicate; and therefore it would be to me but an unprofitable toil, and therefore I will leave that Work to such as intend to receive.

*Ans.* By what Rule can, or dare ye resolve not to partake, before ye take the way of Gods appointment to examine first, and then determine? Is it not just with God, to leave you to your own counsels, since ye will not follow his? Is your method better than Gods? Your way is either for never Communicating, or never to Communicate aright; for if you will not examine, ye shal not

Communicat aright; Dare you say, that any of Gods Commands are unprofitable, whose Commands are for our good always, and in keeping of them is great reward. *Psal. 19. 11.* Will ye joyn with these impudent wretches, who say, *what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, Mal. 3. 14.* But when ye say it's tedious, then ye speak your heart, and discover the root of your objection, even as the Sluggard, *he will be undone, and slain if he go out to his work, Prov. 22. 13.* The slothful man saith there is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets; yet no other seeth this lion in the way, but the sluggard.

2. *Object.* I know I am a Believer, and all Believers will be saved, and have a right to the Lords Table, what needeth more searching?

*Ans.* If ye know it, the less labour in examining will serve, and if it be as you say, you are the most inexcusable for this neglect, and do foolishly requite the Lord for his bountiful dealing, and gracious obliging you to all chearful obedience; If your faith be so clear already, what harm to bring it to the light, specially in a season when the Lord requireth the trying of it.

2. Do ye know before you try, that your Faith is not Dead? Do ye consider the direful consequents of a mistake in this? *Is not the tryal of your faith more precious than that of gold, 1 Pet. 1. 7.* Are ye become wiser than the Apostle James, who insisteth so much in the discovery of precious justifying Faith, that it may be discriminate from a delusive dead Faith? which leaveth its owner dead in his sins, *Jam. 2. 17, 18, 19.*

3. *Object.* I acknowledge it a Duty to examine my self, but it's such a Duty as I am not able to manage, I find my self incapable of any advantage by it, for when ever I Essay it, I can come to no conclusion, as to the state of my Soule.

*Ans.* If you give up with all holy duties that are difficult, then take heed that ye do not next give up with the way to Heaven, for it is a narrow way as Christ hath told us; and if you take a Liberty to step aside always when you find it narrow, how do you think to get through it? if you must needs have an easy way? it is very

very easy to find it in the Broad way leading to Destruction, you will have plenty of fellow-travellers there, who all love it because it is easy: Are not all Holy Duties difficult to perform because of the Perverseness of our natures? Shall we therefore abandon them all? Do ye judge it best to give over Prayer, Meditation, Watchfulness, Mortification, Plucking out the right Eye, &c. And all because it is not easie to perform them aright: why then should ye neglect to Examine your selves, which is an hand maid and furtherance to seriousness in all Duties? but still you say it is a Duty ye cannot perform.

*Ans.* For your help who are willing, but are Discouraged by your weakness to perform it to advantage; first Pray that God would determine your heart to so clear a Duty, that you may be in Suspense no longer whether to perform it or not, and Pray for assistance to it's profitable management.

2. Allow for so great a work convenient time, and place, that thou mayest not be Diverted, nor the Work Hurried over superficially for want of time to attend it, which many are Guilty of who are too Prodigal of time otherways. A *Heathen* could teach us that we should not Complain so much of having little time, as that we lose much; you know how much time is often wasted on verie Trifles, and worse: Let securing of your Eternal State have at least some share, otherways your last farewell to time may be very bitter: when Death shall say not a Moment longer is my Commission, though possibly thy Conscience tell thee some time must be taken to Examine, the Scriptures require it, Ministers press it, and it is the Custom of all who have any seeming seriousness, and Conscience, it's mouth must be stopt lest it be Clamorous; but then the time allowed is so scant that nothing is duely Pondered, and so it turns to a Name of nothing.

3. As thou art to allow Competent time, so also due seriousness is necessary, that it may be suitable to the work in hand, *Examine your selves, know you not your own selves*, 2 Cor. 13. 5. Remember you have a deceitful heart

heart to search, the deceitfulness of sin is such as to hide it self in a searching time, but you are now to find out Gods Enemies, and your own, you are now to Try Titles whose you are, Christ's or the Devils, what Title you have to Christ's Feast of love, do you love or hate Him, hath he cloathed you with a Garment of Salvation, that you may sit down with Confidence at his Table or not: if these things be still trifled over, know that the time is at hand when thou wilt be more serious than thou desirest; serious I say, in Hopeless Terrours: The God of Mercy have pity upon a kind of Infidel Christians in this Age, who do not, and will not Believe what is coming, though Christ hath often given Warning, yea, five times together in one place; *Mark 9. 43, &c. That the Worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*; and that for not being serious and painful in the Duties of Religion.

4. When thou dost examine thy self, fix upon a sufficient Rule, not thy own imaginations, but the word of God, the Law and Testimony. *Isai. 8. 20. Bring forth the hidden works of darkness to this light, for they must shortly be made manifest*: But if thou shalt say then, I may end my Examining work when they begin, for I have nothing to stand before that light, my best works are but darkness where that Lamp shineth, I cannot answer for one of a Thousand of my ways.

*Ans.* Thou hast no other safe Rule, for if thou advancest either thy own Opinion of thy self, or the Opinion of others as a Rule, thou art nothing the wiser, for these may deceive thee and do deceive many, some thinking they are rich when they are poor, *Rev. 3. 17.*

And some have by the Opinion of others, a Name that they live, but Christ sayeth they are dead. *Rev. 3. 1.* Whether canst thou go, but to the word of his lips, who looketh upon things that are equal, from whom thy sentence must come. *Psal. 17. 2. 4.* But Secondly, when thou considerest Scripture Precept, consider also Scripture Condescension, or Gods gracious Condescension there revealed, as when the Scripture saith, *curst is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in*

in the book of the Law to do them, Gal. 3. 10. Yet the same Scripture of Truth saith, Christ was made a curse for us. v. 13. so John 3. 18. He that believeth not, is condemned already. But Rom. 8. There's no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus: Observe also that God accepteth of sincerity where obedience to the precept is not perfect John 17. 6. They have kept thy word, yet their obedience was evidently Imperfect, Therefore let not this break up thy work, that thou hast nothing suitable to the purity of Gods Law, neither conclude thy self graceless, because thou doest not that which thou wouldst in obedience to God, Rom. 7. 19.

5. Beware of insufficient marks or evidences either of a gracious or graceless State, for thou mayest deceive thy self either of the ways: It's not a sufficient work of Grace, thou takest delight some times in approaching to God, as *Isai. 58. 2.* Nor great appearances, if there be no root. *Matth. 13. 5.* forthwith they spring up, the appearance may be such, as beholders may take notice there is a great change, the seed springeth up, then appears a fresh green field, that appeared not before, yet no sound Root; none of the uncorruptible seed which springeth up to Life Eternal. Thou mayest be again and again ashamed of thy sin, and confess it as *Saul*, yet no Godly sorrowing on the account of sin it self, you may also have the outside clean and whited beyond others, and yet be but whited sepulchres, nothing within but Death, what is whiter than a dunghill covered over with snow? but when the snow is gone the dunghill appears as it was.

On the other hand, it is not easie for a Christian when he Examineeth his Soules State, to take the highest degrees of grace which hath been attained by the Saints, and makes them the only Evidences of true graces, as *Pauls* wish, *Rom. 9. 3.* For I could wish that my self were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. There is no ground to think that is recorded as a Mark whereby every Christian must Try if he be in a State of Grace, a man may be a sincere Christian

Christian and not know how to manage such a wish. The Apostle Paul understood how to abide in Christ, notwithstanding of this, his extraordinary Zeal for his Countrey-men, *but the measure of grace is given according to the gift of Christ, Eph. 4.*

The safest way is to take Scriptural Marks, such as are set down, as evidences of sanctifying Grace, for it is Dangerous to overlook these, such as that, *John 3. 3. Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. And 2 Cor. 5. 17. Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new Creature, old things are past away, behold all things are become new,* and such as that *John 14. 23. If a man love me he will keep my words:* Such as these are the Marks we should Try our selves by; for the Spirit of God hath given them as Discoveries of Grace and our Interest in Christ, and therefore it is our sin to neglect them; being a great Mercy that the Lord in a manner Condescendeth to answer our Questions: How shall I know if Heaven shall be my Habitation? It's answered, we must first be born again, we must be regenerated by the Spirit of God: How shall I know if I be in Christ? It's answered, *I must be a new Creature.* How shall I know if I have the love of God. It's answered, *Prov. 8. 17. I love them that love me,* again, how shall I know if I Love him. It's answered, *I must keep his Words, and 1 John 5. And every one that loveth him, that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.*

6. When thou art under this Tryal seek to have thy Witnesses assisting and speaking freely. *Rom. 8. 16. The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God;* albeit Grace hath been freely given thee, yet thou wilt need the help of the Spirit of God to make known the things that are freely given thee, as *1 Cor. 2. 12. If the Giver of Grace shine not on Grace, it will not appear;* the Spirit is the Comforter even on this account, to give the Comfort of his own Grace to to make it evident, for thou canst not Judge without evidence. *1 Cor. 2. 10. The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the Deep things of God.* Thy second Witness is thy own Spirit or Conscience, *for the Spirit beareth witness with*

with our Spirits : Let your Conscience speak freely all it hath to say, as to the very Intentions and Designs of thy heart, for what end, and by what Motives thou performest Duties ; if thy Conscience can Charge thee with hypocrisie, let all its Depositions have a fair hearing, if it accuse thee of any retained Idol of heart, or any lust thou makest Provision for ? if faithful Witnesses be not heard, how shalt thou Judge of thy State ? or if thy Conscience warrantably Excuse and Comfort thee, as to thine Integrity that thou canst humbly appeal to the Searcher of hearts, and thy very Soul content he Search thee, then thou art not to pass from thine Integrity, *Job 27. 5. I will not remove my integrity from me.*

7. Search not only into your sins, nor only into your Grace, but search out both : some who are under Bondage by fear when they Examine themselves look only into their faults, and often are apt to say what need for any further Search, here are so many sins often prevailing, I see them, I feel their Power, the world also may see many of them in my Practice, though they cannot see all ; whereupon they are forthwith discouraged, they open their eyes upon such Words as these, *Psal. 65. 3. Iniquities prevail against me : and their faint heart not considering what follows, as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away ; nor the Interest they have in such Comfort that the Lord will purge away their Iniquities, nor that the Grace of God hath made it their ordinary care to keep themselves from their iniquities Psal. 18. 23. and cannot deny but sin is their greatest burden Psal. 38. 4. And that there is a constant warfare against it, Rom. 7.*

Some on the other hand sinfully covering their sin, consider only their best side *Luke 18. 11. Lord I thank thee that I am not as other men, I am more holy than many others, Isa. 65. 5. But these are found most unsavoury before the Lord, as a smoake in his nose, they please themselves as preferable to all others, they will soon say come see my zeal 2 Kings 10 16. but dare not say as Psal. 139. 24. see if there be any wicked way in me : If thou cover thy sins thou shalt not prosper, Prov. 28. 13.*

Therefore

Therefore be ingenuous with God, and thy own Soul search out the worst, as well as the best, and the best as well as the worst; the worst that thou mayest be yet more humbled, and the best that thou mayest praise.

8 Remember also to search into thy former ways, as well as present: otherways there may be unpardoned Guilt upon thee for former sins. *Psal. 79. 8. Remember not against us former sins. And Psal. 25. 7. Forgive the sins of my youth:* Try what way thou hast taken for the pardon of them, lest as *Lam. 3. 42. thou find we have transgressed, thou hast not pardoned:* Consider also what the Lord did for thee, what he wrought in thee in the days of thy youth, that though thou be not now as lively as then, yet thou must be excited to cry unto God as *Job 29. 4. O that it were with me as in the days of my youth, when the Secret of God was upon my tabernacle:* and though thy declinings should be bitter to thee, yet try if it did convincingly ever appear thou wast the Planting of the Lord, *a tree of righteousness bringing forth fruit unto holiness:* for If it was so, though the Tree appear to be cut down, as *Job 14. 7. There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and vers. 9. through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant;* gather what thou canst safely of this nature that thou mayest yet hope to sing as in the days of thy Youth, *for trees of righteousness never utterly decay both root and branch.*

9. When thou has not only thy souls Condition and way to Examine, whether advancing or backsliding from the ways of God; but the very State of thy Soul whether under the Dominion of Sin or Grace, and must draw some Conclusion from the whole of thy Examinations, for thou art allowed to Judge, *1 Cor. 11. 31. For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged:* Then take care that rash Judgment proceed not, look to God that thy Sentence come from before him: it being of great moment what thou mayest safely judge of thy self, and particularly for clearing thy Right to the Lords Table, Delusions being the Ruine of most men.

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The fourth thing to be considered is, what we are to Try and Examine, and the things that I conceive to be the most necessary are, 1. Our knowledge. 2. Our Faith. 3. Our Love. 4. Our Repentance, and 5. Our Obedience.

As to our Knowledge. 1. It's necessary we have some measure of Knowledge of the Lord Himself. 2. His Covenant. 3. Of the Sacrament it self, particularly how to Discern the Lords Body.

Ye are first to Try your Knowledge of God in Christ, for though it be a small Portion of him we can know, yet we must know or perish. 2 *Theff.* 1. 8. Christ is coming to render Vengeance to them who know not God. This Knowledge of God we must have by Jesus Christ, for the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God is in the Face of Jesus Christ 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. We cannot transact with him in this Ordinance if we be Ignorant of him. 1 *John* 1. 6. *For if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness we lie.* Therefore some competency of Saving Knowledge we must have, lest we be found Children of Darkness, yet 2. In Examining this think not to find a Knowledge unto Perfection, for that which is Perfect is to come, 1 *Cor.* 13. 10. And when that is come, all that is in that Infinite Divine Majestic, can never be known by us or finite Creatures. We are apt vainly, and some times Presumptuously, to desire such a knowledge as is Gods peculiar Prerogative perfectly to know himself, and too often more curious to know what we cannot know, than what we should and may know: how silencing to all flesh should be. *Exod.* 3. 14. *I A M* and though all Creatures be incapable of a comprehensive knowledge of that Glorious Immense being; yet 3. Great shal be our mercy to apprehend aright of him, if your conceptions of him be suitable to the Revelations he hath given of himself in his Word, content thy self with these, lest thou wander in thy Imaginations and lose thy self in Aspiring further. 4. Do not conclude thou knowest nothing of him, because thou knowest not as thou wouldest, or knowest not as thou a Believer shalt hereafter. 5. Yet try if thou

art sure that though weakly, yet it is certainly the Lord himself, thou knowest this is a greater attainment and mercy then many think, to have the Soul delivered from fear of delusion in it's apprehensions of God. These words *Jer. 24. 7.* are of great Consideration, *I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord.* These people had long professed the Knowledge of God and yet need to know that he is the Lord. 6. To be sure of thy knowledge, try what Impressions have the Divine Attributes made on thy Soul, what effects attend thy knowledge. *Psa. 9. 10. They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.* Try also if thy practice can prove thy knowledge. *Jer. 22. 15. 16. Thy father did judgment and justice, he judged the cause of the poor, then it was well with him, was not this to know me saith the Lord. v. 7.* In a special manner try if Christ hath manifested himself to thee, if thereby thou has been enabled to Behold him, and in Beholding transformed into the same Image. *2 Cor. 3. 18.* Be particular with thy Conscience, to have an account wherein that Blessed Image doth appear.

2. VVe must try what knowledge we have of the Covenant of Grace, Because,

First, This Ordinance of the Lords Supper is one of it's Seals; for here we have the New Testament in his Blood, and this blood is the Blood of the Covenant. *Heb. 13. 20. The blood of the everlasting Covenant,* therefore the Seal shall be profained, if there be no knowledge of that gracious Transaction and Covenant unto which it is a Seal. 2. VVe are obliged actually to renew our Covenant with the Lord when we partake of this Ordinance, for we are to embrace Christ according to the Terms of his Covenant: Receiving of Christ, and joyning our selves to the Lord is the very Substance of the VVork, which cannot be performed if we be Ignorant of the Covenant, for who can take hold or Joyn in a Covenant whereof he is utterly Ignorant? and the man who taketh not hold of the Covenant, cannot have a right to the Seal, try then particularly.

Fist, If ye know the chief Articles of the Covenant, if ye know the Difference betwixt doing, as the Condi-  
tion

tion of the Covenant of VVorks; and believing as the Condition of the Covenant of Grace: try if you believe this great Gospel truth in your heart, *that whosoever believeth shall not perish* John 3. 16. 2. And that the Covenant of Grace requireth perfection, though sincerity be accepted, *Matth. 5. 48.* 3. And that all sincere believing hath gracious Fruits and VVorks attending it, *for we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works* Eph. 2. 10. 4. Do ye know him who is surety of this better testament Heb. 7. 22. In whom all the Promises are, yea, and Amen. Do ye know that all your Interest in this Covenant is by Jesus Christ? *who is given a Covenant for the people,* Isa. 42. 6.

5. Do ye know that all your Salvation and all that ye should desire is in this Covenant. *2 Sam. 23. 5.* That it's Ordered in all things for your good and sure, hath the Lord shoven you his Covenant, *Psal. 25. 14.* Do ye in heart believe it to be sure? 6. VVere ye ever taught of God how to take hold of this Covenant, and how to Subscribe your selves the Lords, *Isa. 44. 5. One shall say I am the Lords, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord;* If ye know nothing of it, ye cannot perform it, and if not performed the Seal is not yours, for ye have not Subscribed to the Deed. Remember Christian thou hast no other Charter for thy part of Heaven but this Covenant of Grace, and if thou art a Christian indeed, it will be to thee as a Fountain of Joys, *that he hath made with thee an everlasting Covenant,* thou wilt never think thy self safe till thou know thou art Savingly in it; and therefore it will be the great concern of thy Soul how to Joyn thy self to the Lord, especially before thou partake of it's Seal: blessed is that hour wherein a man may say, now I subscribed my self the Lords, I have given my self to him, and he hath received me graciously, what has thou to do from thy Birth to thy Grave, like this which can make thee sing in the face of Death.

3. Try thy Knowledge of the Sacrament it self, specially if thou canst Spiritually and believingly Discern the Lords Body, for if thou Discernest no more than

Bread and VVine, thou wilt Receive no more; and if thou Receivest no more, thou hast not Received the Sacrament of Christs Institution, thou hast but a shadow for the Substance; besides the Guilt of profaning that Holy Ordinance: The words of the Holy Ghost are carefully to be remarked. 1 Cor. 11. 29. *he eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the Lords Body.* This Discerning of his Body is a Discerning Spiritually Christ himself as Crucified; and if this one thing be wanting, the Communicant will surely Eat and Drink unworthily: Therefore put such Questions as these to thy self: First I am persuaded that the Son of God, did take unto him our nature, and in due time did shed his Blood, for the Remission of the sins of many? 2. That this our Blessed Saviour did Institute this Ordinance of the Lords Supper to be Celebrated in Remembrance of him. 3. That the Bread and VVine there presented and Blessed, doth Represent his Body and Blood. 4. That Christ who Offered himself to his Father, doth in this Ordinance Offer himself to be Received by Believers. 5. That in Offering himself to be Received by them, he Offereth unto them also the Benefits purchased by his Death. 6. That every partaker must so Discern him by Faith. 7. And every Partaker is Obligated by Faith to Receive himself with all his Benefits, when he Receiveth that Bread, which Christ Requireth to take and eat, and that no person should presume to eat of that Bread or drink of that Cup, but with a full purpose of heart thankfully to Receive himself? seek to be established in these before thou go to the Lords Table, that thou mayest partake in Faith, and not by eating and Doubting, or Eating and Ignorant what thou art about, many Souls are Guilty before God, for taking so little pains to prevent their being Guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, and some not of the very worst, obstruct their own Comfort by indistinct Communicating: there being no action under the heavens that Requireth more fixed, ripe, and distinct apprehensions, than partaking at the Lords Table.

Secondly, Our Faith must be Examined before we go to the

the Lords Table. Consider first the Reasons why this must be done. And 2. How to find out Saving Faith. The Reasons. 1. Christ himself is to be Received at his Table, and this Receiving of him is Believing, as is plain by John 1. 12. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* Therefore Christ cannot be Received without Faith, and if he be not Received, the Sacrament is profaned: The Communicant should be a believing Believer, having Faith not onlie in Habit, but in Act.

3. Our Faith must be Examined, because we are VVarned that there are manie sorts of Faith, and yet but one kind of Faith Is Saving whereby the man is Justified: we Read of a Believing which Devils have *James 2. 19.* Some wicked men also are said to Believe, yet remaining in the bond of Iniquitie, *Acts 8. 13.* VVe have an account also that some Believed for a while *Luke 8. 13.* It's Lamentable that men stand not in awe of such Scriptures, and so few moved with fear, least their Faith be no better, we Read also of some mens Faith raised so high as thereby to work Miracles, and yet their last Sentence *Depart from me, Matth. 7. 21, 22.* It appears these men did mistake true Saving faith, thinking such as they had, would cary them to Heaven; for they make it a plea for their Admissions, *did we not cast out Devils in thy Name;* doubtless this made them Christians of great Fame in the VVorld: but how easie is it even for men of great Gifts to mistake Faith, and go to Death without a Discovery of that Myserie. VVe are warned also of a dead faith *James 2. 17.* Such a faith as found men, and leaveth them dead in their sins. It cannot therefore be safe after such warnings, for any man to Conclude, that because in the general he believeth, therefore he shal be Saved, and hath a Right to the Lords Supper, except the nature of his faith be instructed and made out to be such as thereby he is united to Christ, and so shal be Justified.

4. This Danger of mistaking Faith being so great, it's our Mercy that there is a particular Command to

Examine our Faith as we would be Secured, we are not Reprobates, 2 Cor. 13. 5. So that if this be still neglected, we not only endanger our Souls by Delusion, but shal be found sinfully disobedient to a merciful Command.

5. That which is said Heb. 11. 6. *That without faith it's impossible to please God*, should of it's self engage us to Examine our Faith; what Regard can we have to God, and be contentedly in that State, wherein it's impossible to please him, or be ignorant whether in that State or not? can ye look up to God and think it not worth the while to enquire whether ye be pleasing or displeasing to him? Dare ye sit down at his Table not knowing, but it may be said of you in particular, it's impossible for this man to be pleasing to me? and no wonder he cannot be accepted as not being in Christ, there's no acceptation but in the Beloved, Eph. 1. 6.

These few Reasons without adding mo, may convince, that it highly concerneth thee to be at the utmost pains in trying of thy Faith; Consider also that all thy pains shal be richly payed Home, if by searching thou shalt find that God hath bestowed upon thee Precious Faith, 2 Pet. 1. 1. *The Faith of Gods Elect*, Tit. 1. 1. *That Faith whereby a sinner is justified and hath peace with God*, Rom. 5. 1. *That Faith whereby thou art Sanctified*, Acts 26. 18. *That Faith the end whereof shal be the Salvation of thy Soul*, 1 Pet. 1. 9. *Receiving the end of your faith even the Salvation of your Souls*. What pains should be valued where this is the Result. How great may be thy Joy in his Salvation, when thou canst say, *The beloved is mine, and I am his*, Cant. 2. 16. *Christ is mine, the Pledges of his Love are mine, his Fellowship is mine, his Food and Table is mine, He hath clothed me with the garments of Salvation*, Isa. 61. 10. *I shal not be rejected for want of a Wedding Garment, Shall be not with Christ freely give us all things*, Rom. 8. 32.

Q. But what way shal I take to Examine my Faith? First try if you can observe the direct Actings of Faith, that you may say now Lord I believe, though before it be well out of your lips, ye must add Lord help my unbelief,

belief, *Mark 9. 24.* Acceptable Believing is of so great Importance, that serious souls are solicitous so to Believe; as that they might immediately Reflect upon it, and finding it believing indeed; Blessed Jesus Christ would needs have it out of his Disciples own mouths that they did Believe, *John 16. 30.* *By this we believe,* They do not say we have Believed, but in the very present time we Believe. And in the next *verse*, Christ saith *Do ye now believe,* for this Cause it were good especially for you who doubt of your Faith, to set your selves for actual present Believing before ye go to the Lords Table; some people are apt to weary of long Debates in their mind, whether they have Believed or not; and tempted to give it over, who by the Blessing of God upon this mean are Relieved of their Fears, and cleared of their Doubts, Addressing themselves to the Lord with all the Reverence and Seriousness they can attain, and in the Sense of their sin and need of a Saviour, set themselves to Receive and Embrace Christ as their Redeemer and Lord. This Mean hath been so Countenanced of God, that after it's serious Performance, some hath gone to the Lords Table with desire, Chearfulness, and Peace though Doubting before.

*Object,* But I cannot Believe when I please, nor is it so light a matter to go off hand and Believe, and so have done.

*Answer.* 1. Ye cannot Believe too soon; if you Believe indeed. 2. This is an Opportune Season for it, when ye are called to Partake of an Ordinance which you cannot neglect without sin, nor Partake without Believing.

3 Ye are peremptorly Commanded to Believe, therefore it's Duty to endeavour it; and it's such a Duty as should not be Deferred: That ye are Commanded Consider, *John 14. 1.* *1 John 3. 23.* *And this is his Commandment that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.* And that it's a Duty not to be Delayed, see *John 3. 36.* *He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him.* If you still reply, I cannot Believe though it be a Duty: I will Answer that no more can you perform

perform any Religious Duty aright, will ye therefore resolve to perform no Religious Duty? will ye not Pray, because ye cannot Pray aright? will ye never praise, because ye cannot do it aright? see what thy verie Reason can *Answer* to this plain Argument; what ever God Commandeth we are obliged to endeavour Obedience unto it, but God Commandeth us to Believe, therefore we are Obligated to endeavour Obedience to this Command of Believing. And though it be granted that we cannot Believe when we will, yet we are to endeavour, and put out the Withered Hand, hoping we may take it in Whole: if the Lord shal say *arise from the dead*, as *Ephes. 5. 14.* Should we Dispute and Proudly Quarrel in stead of Obeying? cannot the Lord of Life give Life with the Word of Command as to Dead *Lazarus*, mind *John 11. 25.* *He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live.* But if ye cannot find the Truth of your Faith by this manner of Trial; yet ye are not so to leave it, for what quiet can a man have in his Soul, not knowing but he is still under the Wrath of God? as all Unbelievers are, and not knowing what hour that VVrath may Surprise him, with it's intollerable weight and Eternity. Therefore other Means must be essayed to Search it out by it's Fruits, for *Luke 6. 44.* *A tree is known by his fruits,* and the Apostle *James* saith *He will shew his faith by his works*: it's a great mercy that there is any way to have it secured.

Consider these two ways, wherein by the Blessing of God, the sincerity of your Faith may be Discovered, as first, by trying your ordinary Dependance on God, and 2. By searching into the Gracious Fruits of Faith, specially that by Faith the heart is purified, *Acts 15. 9.*

For the first, enquire at your own Conscience, what Course is ordinarily taken for Light and Direction, when ye are in Darkness or Doubts; do ye still lean to your own Understanding, or on Christ as made of God VVisdom unto Believers, *1 Cor. 1. 30.* 2 VVhen ye do Pray for wisdom and Light, is it that you may walk according to that Light or Direction? Deal ye Ingenuously with God? not seeking Counsel of God, with a

Reserve



Reserve, if it be to your own Humour, but Resolved to walk in his Light whithersoever it lead you, has thy Soul fixed on the Lord as thy Guide, then Remember what is said; *Psal. 73. 24. Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to glory,* for Glory will follow, to the Followers of this Guide.

2. Try also what way thou taketh for thy Guilt: whether dost thou go for ease to thy Conscience when it accuseth thee? (as it certainly will if not seard) is it to the Blood of Christ? or dost thou make a cover to thy Sin of thy Duties, thy Tears, thy Mourning, thy Amending of some evil Practices, and thy not being as some other men? if this be thy way, thou art yet a Stranger to Gospel Faith: but if thou believest in thine heart, that the Blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and thou will not dishonour that perfect Sacrifice, by thinking it insufficient for thy sin, and therefore leans thy Soul with all it's Guilt upon him, *who made his soul an offering for sin, Isai. 53. 10.* Thy care is to be found in him not having thine own Righteousness, but that which is by the Faith of the Son of God, thou must have a Jesus to Save thee from thy sins, thou must flee to him as thy Refuge, then Consider what is said, *Heb. 6. 18. That we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for a refuge:* our merciful Redeemer saith not to the poor sinner, thou hadst never come to me, but because thou could make no other shift, thou has made me thy last choice; therefore be gone. No no but when the poor sinner cometh only by a Consent of necessity, yet he will in no ways cast him out, though he could find no other Refuge, yet when he cometh he shal have strong Consolation; thou findest Blessed Jesus like none but himself, for this not the manner of men.

3. Search thy way, as to the subduing of thy Sin: if thou sufferest sin peaceably to prevail as its willing servant, or is its prevailing bitter, making thee often complain to God against thy self, as *Psal. 65. 3,* Art thou not often crying to him, that no sin may have dominion over thee? That he would cleanse thee from secret faults, and

and keep thee back from sinning, *Psal. 19. 12, 13.* Art thou not searching also upon what ground thou mayest expect the mortifying of any sin; For if thou art sincere with God, and pained with Sin, thou wilt be as earnest to know upon what grounds thou mayest expect the subduing of sin, as the pardon of it. Therefore it will not suffice thee to have it to say, thou has prayed for a clean heart, but to know what encouragement God hath given to hope for it, this will make thee search the Promises for cleansing and sanctifying of thy Soul, and what interest thou hast in these Promises, this will make thee careful for an interest in Christ Crucified, that by him thy lusts may be crucified, and that thou serve sin no more, as *Rom. 6. 6.* And though it be one of the greatest trials of thy Faith, to believe the mortification of some rooted sins that easily beset thee, yet dare thou not distrust the Promise of God, *Ezek. 36. 25. From all your filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you :* Though thou has been striving many years against some particular sins, without the desired success, yet thy regard to the Promise continueth, thou dependest still upon it, as *Mic. 7. 19. He will subdue our iniquities :* This is the Faith of the Saints, who now inherit the Promises.

4. When thou has Duties to perform, far above thy strength : try what is then thy way? Dost thou neglect them, because they are difficult, or dost thou go to thy work in the strength of the Lord God? If thou goest to work in his strength, then thou art acting Faith : Art thou not strongest, when weakest in thy own opinion ; and upon this experience, that out of weakness thou art made strong, and that God never faileth thee, thou resolvest to refuse no duty he requireth of thee? for thy *Ebenezer* is set up hitherto hath God helped: this is direct living by Faith ; and if Believers were more exact in remarking, how often God doth countenance their essays to believe, when they are weakest in their own eyes the comfort of their Faith would not be so rare ; how gratefully is it to be remembered, that when there is sharp sense of guilt, and fear of being deserted, because of guilt, yet engaging in work that God calleth unto, some  
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can hardly instance a time when they lean to promised strength, but God appeareth the glory of their strength: Whoso observeth these things, are in the way to understand the loving kindness of the Lord, and so obtain the comfort of their Faith.

5. If thou canst not yet take comfort to thy self, that this precious Faith is thine: Search yet further, for it's worth the pains of many days or years, if it be found at last: Try then if thou canst find it in the Furnace of affliction, where sometimes it shineth more brightly, than in any easie lot.

In the day of thy Calamity whether goest thou for help, to the arm of Flesh, or to the arm of *Jehovah*? Where goest thou first, dost thou no sooner come to trouble, but thou lookest up to meet with God as soon as the trouble? There is much to be discovered of the dependance of a Soul, by the way it first taketh in Affliction; for what is habitually trusted, is commonly first resorted unto; When godly *Job* heareth the surprizing tidings of the Death of his dear Children, and other losses; immediately he looketh to God and Worshippeth, *Job* 1. 20. So when *David* was distressed by the *Amalathies*, taking his Relations, and all away Captives, *1 Sam.* 30. 1. The first thing he doth, is to encourage himself in the Lord, *verse* 6. But the first thing we hear the poor Men speaking, who were not so acquainted with dependance on God, was the Stoning of *David*. Next, when thy tryals are overwhelming, so that thou art ready to sink; Try if thou believest that there is a Rock able to bear thee, and the heaviest of thy Burdens; and that God hath not left his people so destitute, as that perishing must needs be the result of these overwhelmings: But as it is, *Psal.* 61. 2, *When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I:* So thou betakest thy self to God, as thy Rock; and withal commits the leading of thy soul unto this Rock, to him who is thy Rock, here is abounding Faith, not only trusting the Lord as the Rock of Ages, but the leading of thy soul to himself, thou commits the very management of thy Soul into his hands, if thou canst claim this as thy way, then thou has the precious Faith thou art seeking after. Try

Try also the unfeignedness of thy Faith, by other unfeigned fruits : If thou has true Faith toward God, it will carry up thy heart to him ; thou will live upon Christ, and obtain some real victory over this World, it shal not captivate thy soul, as it doth the souls of Men who have their portion in this life, *1 Joh. 5. 4.* It will raise thee to the affectionat Meditations of thy better Countrey, and there thy desires will be captivated, until thy self be placed with them, *Heb. 11. 16.* Thou will find the first fruits so pleasant, as to deaden thy heart to the pleasures of sin : for Faith will purifie thy heart, *Act. 15. 9.* And though this evidence of Faith appeareth difficult, because of the many impurities of heart remaining in Believers : Yet the Words of God must be regarded, and this purifying of the heart, must, and will be found, where justifying precious Faith is ; for Believers even in this life obtain some measure of true purity, as appeareth by *Matth. 5. 8.* *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* For here Christ declareth some are pure in heart, before they come to see God, as they shal see him hereafter, so, *Joh. 15. 3.* *Now are ye clean, or pure,* as the word is commonly rendered ; Believers being in a justified state, they obtain in this life some real purity of heart, notwithstanding of their Imperfections ; and it becometh a snare, or woe to souls that study no purity, because of no intire perfection in this life, and these have the true beginnings of holy purity, who follow that example, and direction, *2 Cor. 7. 1.* *Let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ; for,*

1. Christ died, to purifie a people unto himself, zealous of good works, *Tit. 2. 14.* And he will see the travel of his soul.

2. Christ dwelleth in the heart by Faith, and where he dwelleth, there the throne of iniquity cannot stand, *Psal. 94. 20.*

3. All who receive forgiveness of sins, are sanctified by faith in Christ, *Acts 26. 18.*

4. Sin shall not have dominion over any, who are brought truly under grace, *Rom. 6. 14.*

Search

Search diligently for this purifying of the heart, as thou wouldest not be deceived of thy faith & hope, for according to *1 Joh 3.3. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure; think not of accepting thy self, where the words of God are, every man examine your selves, Particularly in these 4 things;*

*First,* If thou findest an active Principle in thy Soul standing in opposition to sin; if sin be hated, so as thou can say of it, it's the evil I hate, *Rom. 7. 15.* See that this hatred be not pretended, and Sin in the mean time cherished; for it's not only a sure step toward, but also a great length in the purity of holiness, to be a hater of Sin.

2. And to secure the truth of this hatred, try if there be an ordinary warfare against Sin: For if it be hated, there will be opposition made to it, as *Rom. 7. 23.* Thy sins will feel thy grace to have some power; and therefore Christ compareth the mortifying of sin to the cutting off the right hand, &c. And where there is nothing of this, it's vain to pretend hatred.

3. Try if thou lovest the Law, which requireth this purity: for to love that very Law which restraineth from Sin, yea, the sins that easily beset us; is a blessed, but I fear a rare attainment, to be content to be hedged up from the way of our own hearts; and to love the hedge of Godsmaking, not to wish in heart, that the Laws of God were otherwise, that we might have a greater liberty for sin, *Psal. 119. 97. O how love I thy law:* There is the greater necessity of searching into this, because it's given us as the character of a godly man, to delight in the law of the Lord, *Psal. 1. 2.*

4. Try what success attendeth your endeavours against sin: if by dependance on the spirit of Christ, which mortifieth the deeds of the body, it may be said of you, as *1 Pet. 1. 22. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.* Mark these words ye have purified: whereby we may see that Believers have some success against their sin, their work is to cleanse themselves, and their labour is not in vain in the Lord: and it's necessary, that every Christian have some instances, and proofs of this in readi-

diness, that he hath purified his Soul, and kept himself from his iniquity: and shut not your eyes upon that awful evidence of an interest in Christ, *Gal. 5. 24. They that are Christs have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.* Know then, that it not only should be, but is a sound Believers work to be purifying his Soul, though he get not sin abolished in this life.

3. Communicants should also examine their love to Christ before they go to the Lords Table: and if any shal say that this is a superfluous burdening of people with unnecessary questions, their faith being clear what needeth examining of love also? But I find Christ is of another mind, who examineth his followers, both as to their Faith, & love, *John 16. 31. Doye now believe? And John 21. 16. Lovest thou me.* Therefore we are concerned to be in a readines to answer both, and if our love cannot abide the trial, no more can our faith, *for faith worketh by love, Gal. 5. 6.* Consider first, that Christ manifesteth himself to such as love him, *John 14. 23.* And if Christ do not manifest himself to us at his Table, we shal never be able to discern him aright. A manifested Christ is the blessing and beauty of that work, even when he manifesteth himself, as crucified, bleeding to death; he is then most lovely and beautiful to the Believer, he then sheweth himself dying in pure love; and what manifestation of him should be more engaging, and overcoming; but no eyes can thus profitably behold him, except he manifest and shew himself, which the lovers of Christ may expect, and therefore our love to him should be examined.

2. This holy Communion is a banquet of love; and therein it might well be said he giveth his loves, giving himself and the pledges of his love, *Cant. 7. 12.* And is appointed only for the lovers of Christ, they are his friends and beloved, who are allowed to eat and drink abundantly, *Cant. 5. 1.* The lovers of Christ are the only prepared persons for Communion with him, *for he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, 1 Job. 4. 16.* And no man is capable of Communion with him who wants it; love being necessary to true fellowship: Ther's need then to search for it, lest Christ have it to say, as *Job. 5.*

42. *I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.*

3. This grace should be carefully searched for: Because we are ready to flatter and deceive our selves, with an hypocritical love, *Ezek. 33. 31. with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.* They make a show of what they have not, men are not willing to charge themselves with the want of love to God, it appears so hainous, and therefore must have it's shadow, but their heart is reserved for others, and far from God, *Isa. 29. 13. They have removed their heart far from me,* Yet the poor men were honouring God with their lips.

4. Blessed Jesus Christ not only declareth, that love is the great Command, *Matth. 22. 37.* But also searcheth most narrowly and pressingly, for this grace in his people, as appears by questioning Peter 3 times if he loved him, until the godly man was grieved, fearing his love was suspected; This wounded him, that he was asked the third time, *Job. 21. 17.* Christs questions, should teach us to question our selves, and to be in readiness for such an answer, as was then given, *Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee;* He could give an account of his love, and appeal to the searcher of hearts for it's sincerity, and so should we.

5. It distresth serious souls to be in doubt of their love, being of the same mind with the Apostle, *1 Cor. 13. 12. If I have not charity or love, I am nothing.* And ver. 3. *Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth nothing.* Some of the people of God know well, that they take pains in religious Duties, but have no comfort in them, fearing their diligence floweth not from a principle of Love, it would be great joy to them if they were assured, that ever they performed any duty by a constraint of the love of Christ; and is worth the labour of many years, when our searching cometh at length to this issue; *Lord thou knowest I love thee:* and no wonder it be most sweet to the soul to know the truth of its love, for thereby it may warrantably read and conclude it self beloved of God, *1 John 4. 19. We love him, because he first loved us,* *Prov. 8. 17. I love them that love me, and*

*Job. 16. 27. the father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me:* This being discovered, the Believer may go to God as his exceeding joy, *Psal. 43. 4.* What riches, or honour like this, to be actually interested in the love of God? with what pleasure and confidence may such a man go to the Lords Table, knowing that the master of the Feast loveth him.

*And for your help to discover, whether ye love the Lord Jesus in sincerity or not, take notice of these few things,*

*First,* Christ himself condescendeth to give us help how to resolve this question in proposing to us a sure evidence of love, *John 14. 23. If a man love me, he will keep my words.* And though this mark appear difficult, because of our many failings in keeping of his words; yet it will be dangerous to overlook it, and may prove a contempt of the mercy that is in such a discovery, and a neglect of so gracious a bond to obedience, that as we would testify our love to Christ, we must keep his words.

2. Hereby Christ also sheweth that a study of obedience, and pleasing him will natively flow from love, if we love, we cannot but endeavour to please the Party beloved, his commands will not be grievous, *1 John 5. 3. This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments and his Commands are not grievous.* Love maketh his yoke easie, and pleasing him their delight, *1 John 3. 22.* We keep his Commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. Try if your way be formed for his eye, and greatest care to please him, whoever else be displeased,

3. And when this is become your habitual affectionate care to please him, though there be failings; yet Christ can discern the sincerity of your love, and say, *you have loved me, Job. 16. 27.* He can discern a willing spirit, when the flesh is weak; though Christ had his Disciples often to reprove, yet knowing he had their hearts, and that their ordinary care was to obey him: He as their good advocat, declareth to his Father that they had kept his Word, *Job. 17. 6. And they have kept thy word.*

*Secondly,* If ye be lovers of Christ, ye will desire his fellowship,



lowship, *I sought him whom my soul loveth*, Cant. 3. 1. Their prayers are not only to quiet their conscience, that they have not neglected their Duty, but they long to be near to him, and must seek until they find, it was himself they sought, and nothing else can supply his room.

Thirdly, True love to Christ is earnest for his love, and cannot be quieted without it: there is a wonderful boldness in this Grace, they aspire to no less than to know that Christs desire is toward them, Cant. 7. 10. Then they know they are safe, then they know he will not be long from them, the desire of their soul being toward him, *Isa. 26. 8.* And his desire toward them, his favour and love is better than life to them: And therefore they cry as, *Psal. 106. 4. Remember me O Lord with the favour that thou bearest to thy people*: It's the love that thou hast to thy chosen that is my happiness, whatever other mercies I get, yet they will all leave me miserable if I have not that favour, which is peculiar to thy chosen, Lord give me that favour which will at length make me glory with thine inheritance, Lord do to me, as thou usest to do to those who love thy Name, *Psal. 119. 132.* Try what earnestness and wrestlings you ever had for his love, or if common mercies, or common Gifts of the Spirit, be all which you seek after.

Fourthly, If thou be a sincere lover of Christ, thou wilt love his honour, yea, the very place where his honour dwelleth, *Psal. 26. 8.* Thou wilt desire his praise may be glorious, *Psal. 68. 2. Sing forth the honour of his Name, make his praise glorious.* As thou art able, thou wilt set forth the beauty of Christ to engage others, to love and praise him, Cant. 5. 10. And if thou lovest him and his glory, thou wilt be active in glorifying him thy self, *Psal. 86. 12. I will praise thee O Lord my God with all my heart, & I will glorify thy Name for evermore.* Put such questions as these to thy own soul: Is it on my heart how to glorify him? Do I cry to God in secret for help to glorify him? Is it my rejoycing, when he giveth help to do it? Have I fear, that vain glory be more studied, than his glory? Am I as much grieved for dishonour to him, as dishonour to my wretched self? Hath the grace of God so far prevailed,

prevailed, that no applause of men is satisfying, except I have some testimony in my conscience, that I really designed the glory of God: That blessed Word of Christs, should humble us, and make us ashamed of that predominant sin of pride in the World, *John 8. 50. I seek not mine own glory*: How great is the mercy to bear that part of his Image, and the victory sweet, when it can be said, *Nor of men sought we glory, 1 Thes. 2. 6.* The want of this love to Gods glory, and indulged love to vain glory, makes many a poor man lose all his labours in Religion, and ther's no remedy without uprightness of love to God.

*Fifthly, Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him, 1 John 5. 1.* If thou lovest Christ, thou wilt love his Image, and where his renewed Image shineth most, there thou wilt love most: This is so much regarded, that it's improved for the certainty of mens being passed from Death to life, *because they love the brethren, 1 John 3. 14.* Try then who are the excellent in the earth in thy account, try if thou lovest godly persons though mean in the World, or if thou art such as can value no man for his godliness, except he be rich in the World; Try if thou canst love a godly man, though he have no great opinion of thee, it may be thou deservest no great opinion, and should not love him the worse for that: Try thy self the more exactly in this point of thy love to the people of God, because God is greatly dishonoured in this age for the want of it. Beware of patcht up counterfeited agreements, and love before Communion. But as thou art to labour for Communion with Christ himself, to labour to the utmost of thy power, for a cordial Communion of Saints, that you may Feast together here in love and hope, to be together in a better place, and be not saying, I forgive such a Christian; but I desire never to see him, I desire never to speak with him: this will not be found forgiving from the heart as Christ requireth, *Matth. 18. 35. Let your love be without dissimulation, Rom. 12. 9. Not in Word only, but in Deed, promoting the good name of one another, See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently, 1 Pet. 1. 22.* These are

are the Words of God, but Ah how little regarded, and I fear shal not be much regarded, while we continue falling from our first love to Christ, love to him, and his followers must revive together.

4 We should also examine our Repentance, because;

First, Christ hath enjoyned it with a certification, that except we repent, we shal perish, *Luke 13. 3.* How speechless will it render the impenitent perishing sinner, when the Books are opened, and this found, that this obdured sinner was forwarned of this perishing, but shut his ears, and would not hearken.

2. This repentance is that part of Religion, which we are most averse either to act, or try; and therefore the greater need to oblige our selves to search if we have it: For to hear of Faith, and love, and Love goeth more easily down, the very naming of them is sweet to such as know little of them; but cannot with patience hear of conviction, mourning, or departing from iniquity; many also continue to ensnare their own souls with the conceit that they believe so well, that they need not trouble themselves with repentance; but they should remark Christs requiring of both, *Mark 1: 15.* Repent and believe.

3. Others observing repentance to be peremptorily commanded, Conclude that some repentance they must have, but are satisfied with a shadow of it, and are so superficial, that any extorted flash of sorrowing, any change any returning, though not to the most High satisfieth them. We find, *Hos. 7. 16.* That some return, but not to the most High. They think they have returned sufficiently, And therefore need no more saying as *Mal. 3. 7.* *Wherein shall we return?* The Lord seeth that they are yet to turn to him, as in the same ver. *return unto me,* saith the Lord, but they think otherwise, this should make us afraid, lest God do not judge of our Repentance as we do, and therefore to examine it in time; It's easie for people to think themselves sufficiently qualified for a Communion, or for Heaven it self, but the woe will be that it was only themselves thought so, when they find God their Judge of another mind,

4. There

4. There is the more need to examine our Repentance in this age, wherein the broken in spirit, and contrite in heart, are as signs and wonders; as if all the broken in heart before us had been in an error, and troubled themselves in vain, or as if God never regarded any such Soul-exercise, and wounding of Spirit, though he hath expressly declared, *Isa. 66. 2. But to this man will I look even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.* Then it's necessary as men would have God to look favourably upon them, as ye would have a comfortable reviving, look at this Table, to try if ever you were wounded in heart for your sin: See to it lest the searcher of hearts have it to say, here is a man, that to this day was never humbled, *Jer. 44. 10.* Never pierced at the heart; never at what shal I do to be saved, never so wounded, but he could easily cure himself, no use for that mercy, *Psal. 147. 3. He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.* You will needs go to the Communion, but it's not for any great business you have to do there, you have no burden of sin to take off; as finding it too heavy for your selves, *Psal. 38. 4.*

5. There is the greater need to search particularly into the sincerity of our Repentance, before we approach the Lords Table; because some serious Christians may deprive themselves of that benefit, fearing their Repentance is not sound, and that because they had never such a measure of grief as others, never so deeply wounded for sin as they think they should, or as they have perceived by others who refused to be comforted, were long in bondage of fear, and ready to be swallowed up with grief and terror.

To clear this a little, Consider, first, That trouble or terror of mind of it self, cannot prove any gracious good in a soul: A *Judas* hath terror of mind, but no grace, terror is sometimes a Judgement from God, as *Lev. 26. 16. I will appoint over you terror, and Deut. 28. 20. The Lord shal send upon thee vexation,* And some wicked persons are consumed with terrors, *Psal. 73. 19.* Therefore it's not safe to desire such terror of mind as some have been under; for it was their plague.

2. Men may have a temporary sorrowing and grief, which sin hath occasioned, and yet their sorrowing is not for their sin, nor any sanctifying grace in their mourning. A *Saul* may lift up his voice and weep, and confess others more Righteous than himself, and yet still go on in his sin, 1 *Sam.* 24: 16, 17. Some may make a great noise of their repentance, as *he lift up his voice and wept*. And yet but a worldly sorrow that *David* was like to have the Kingdom is his greatest grief.

3. Some are surprised with a sudden fear of Wrath, which they cannot shake off; but are as captives, so far from any true and humbling sense of sin; that all their trouble is for being troubled, and cannot help it. They are in chains and fetters not knowing for what, for it seized them without any apprehension, or sense of their sin: This doth sometimes make a great alteration and commotion while it continueth, so that they tremble under it, as *Felix*, *Acts* 24: 23. The poor man knew not what was come on him, he is frightened but getteth no good of it; and therefore desires *Paul* to be gone: I have seen severals after the same manner frightened with a sudden fear of Judgement, and for any thing appeared, their Religion never went a greater length; yet their trouble in the time was great, and made a great noise, but when the fright was over, their Religion was also over. It is not safe then to set up such as patterns for your Repentance, though the degree of their anguish might be greater than yours.

4. Though the Law be our School-master to bring us unto Christ, *Gal.* 3. 24. Whereby we must have the knowledge of our sin, be convinced, be humbled; Yet we shall not find that every one who cometh to Christ is, or must be a like measure humbled, all are not in a like depth, before their heads be brought above water, all have not the pangs of the new Birth alike painful, all are not struck down to the ground, and made blind before they be comforted, as *Paul*, We find not the degree of any mans grief for sin, set up as a Standard, whereby all others must be measured; but we find the difference between a worldly, and a godly sorrowing much regarded,

2 Cor. 7. 10. *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death.* Therefore we shal be wiser to search out the nature of our grief, than its degrees only, If it be a godly sorrowing on the account of sin, and its sinfulness, in provoking a holy and gracious God, This we find made a ground of comfort to the people of God, *ver. 11.* That they sorrowed after a godly sort, and reformation attended their sorrow.

5. It's necessary also, that we take care lest our pressing for such a measure of grief, be not by the secret deceitfulness of our hearts, designed as a Sacrifice for our sin, Idolizing it too much, as if thereby sin might be expiated.

6. It would be also considered, that poor frail men may be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow; so that some persons seek after they know not what, even such a measure of sorrow as might be their own ruine, 2 Cor. 2: 7, You ought rather to comfort such a man, *lest perhaps he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow:*

7. Where sorrowing for sin is truly godly sorrowing; yet one Christian may have a higher degree, than another who is also sincere; a man may have true Faith, true Love, true Repentance; and yet another exceed him in all these: for both the grace, and its measure are the gift of Christ, Eph. 4. 7. *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

8. Yet because the most common danger is a defect in this godly sorrowing, and no sincere humbling sound, with many professed Christians, no such grief or hatred of sin, as can bear the name of sound Repentance, and effectual turning to God: Therefore as it is a most necessary grace, we should seek to grow in it, as we would have God to lift us up, we must be humbled, Jam. 4: 10. *And blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted, And that you may be in some measure helped to discern the soundness of your Repentance, Search thy own soul for these things.*

First, If thou grieveest for the first motions of sin in thy heart, and resistest them; though they go no further than thy

thy thoughts and imaginations, and though not intertain-  
ed by thy affections; *For the thought of foolishness is sin,*  
*Prov. 24: 9.* But thou findest a hateing of vain thoughts,  
*Psal. 119: 113.* This was a comfort to the man of God,  
and so it may be to thee.

2. Do you not find a sincere loathing of your selves, so  
that hardly can any man judge thee worse, than thou  
judgest thy self, and this thou feelest without dissimula-  
tion; By this ingenuous judging of your self, you may  
take comfort for what is said, *1 Cor. 11: 31.* For if we  
would judge our selves, we should not be judged, ye shal  
not be judged into condemnation, godly *Job* lookt upon  
this abhorring of himself, as sound Repentance, *Job 42:*  
*6.* For he really judged himself vile, *Job 40: 4.*

3. Dost thou not search out thy sins purposely that  
thou may'st mourn over them, and turn from them?  
This makes it appear, that sin is hated in the soul, when  
thou dost search for it as an enemy to be cast out, when a  
soul is so straight with God, that help is desired to find  
out his enemies, *Psal. 139: 23.* *Search me O God, and*  
*know my heart, try me and know my thoughts; And see if*  
*there be any wicked way in me:* It's good when a Christian  
resisteth sin thats obvious to him, but it's better, when he  
desireth Gods help to discover secret sins that may be  
lurking in his heart, that he may oppose every sin, though  
this give him more matter of mourning, yet being sincere  
he must pursue sin to the utmost.

4. And dorth it not endear thy heart to God, when thou  
get'st help of this nature, that thy greatest enemy tri-  
umpheth not over thee? Yea, for the very hope that he  
will subdue thy iniquity, *Mic.*

5. Is not sin bitter to thee, even when thou hast no  
present thoughts of Wrath to follow upon thy Sin? I  
do not say but it's lawful to mourn for fear of Wrath,  
but it's comfortable to a Christian when he can Observe,  
that some times on the first Discovery of sin, before any  
thought of it's woful fruit come into his mind, it forth-  
with woundeth his heart, for then it appears to be grief  
for Sin, because it's sin, which is true Godly sorrowing,  
we find *Psal. 65. 3.* *Iniquities prevail against me, as for*  
*our*

*our transgressions thou shalt purge them away.* Here is sin lamented as bitter, when yet there is Faith in the very time that these sins shal be purged away; thou has cause to be Comforted to whom sins is bitter when thou hast greatest expectations of pardon, and the remembrance of thy sin melting thy heart into the greatest grief, when thou considerest the tender Mercies of thy God, in pardoning all thy iniquities; sins against Love gives the Child of God the deepest Wounds, hast thou it not to say, that the thoughts of Hell and Wrath hath often left thy heart very obdured? but the thoughts of Gods Love, and care of thy Soul hath softened, and poured it out in mourning, that even thou shouldest provoke him to anger who is so Gracious to thee.

6. Canst thou not give some Instances of particular sins, that are now in a great measure Subdued and thy heart departed from them, by nothing that thou canst know of but by the Grace of God? such sins as thou wast once a very slave unto? Canst thou not now say that by the grace of God thy feet are kept from falling in a great measure, *Psal. 18.36.* Thy turning from sin, is the surest evidence of Repentance, *Psal. 119. 59.*

5. We are obliged also to try our Obedience to God.

*First,* Because Christ will not own us for his friends, if we be not found Obedient to him. *John 15. 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* Therefore as we would enjoy the happiness and comfort of this Friendship, we must study obedience, as we would have his Countenance lifted up upon us at his Table, and be used as his Friends indeed; we must endeavour to have it clear that we obey him from the heart, *Rom. 6. 17.*

2. By our obedience we testifie whose servants we are *Rom. 6. 16. Know ye not that to whom ye yield your selves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.* This therefore should be carefully tried, if the course of our life be serious to the Lord, if we be indeed his Servants he will make us eat, but others shal be hungry, his Servants shal eat of the hidden Manna, ye shal have



have his Company when others are far from any Fellowship with him. John 12. 26. *And where I am, there shall also my servant be: If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.* As ye would enjoy all these, the verie choicest of Mercies. 1. To eat the best of Soul Food; 2. To be accepted into near Communion with Christ; 3. The Father to put honour upon you. 4. As ye would Sing for Joy when others houl for vexation of Spirit, and 5. As ye would at length serve him, and see his Face together, Rev. 22. 3. 4. Labour to have it Secured that ye are entred into his service; and let it not Discourage you from this search into your serving and obeying of him, that ye find great failings: for he whose servant ye desire to be, hath the tongue of the learned, and is able to furnish you with such distinctions as that ye may be found faithful, though not perfect Servants: he saw it necessary to have that recorded for encouraging all the sincere in heart. Matth. 26. 41. *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.* And that some persons of many failings, yet their heart was perfect all their days as Asa, 2 Chron. 15. 17. The Lord knoweth how to manage his own peoples heart so, as these condescensions shal not be perverted into a Latitude for sinning, but only to strengthen when they are under fears, that their Service is not accepted: this the Apostle Paul Comforteth himself, that though he found a Law hindring him from the good he would, yet he *delighted in the Law of God after the inward man*, Rom. 7. 22. nor was this Comfort only Paul's, but remaineth to be a great Encouragment to every Christian who can say without delusion or dissimulation, that he findeth his heart inclined and set upon Obedience to God in all things. Psal. 119. 112. *I have inclined my heart to perform thy Statutes always, even unto the end.*

3. The Lords Table should be approached in obedience to his Command. A Communicant should be engaged to that Ordinance, not only because of the rich benefites he may expect there, if he be seeking Christ, but because of his Command, *Do this in remembrance of me*, and therefore should Examine if a

Principle of Obedience leadeth him to that work, and for your help to find out the sincerity of your Obedience Examine,

First, if thou seekest the Lords precepts; that not only thou endeavourest to perform what thou already knowest, but lest any Duty be omitted, thou searchest for thy Duty, this was a comfort to the man of God, *Psal. 119. 45. I will walk at Liberty because I seek thy precepts*; Thus we find the man of God, so often praying that he would teach him his Law, and not hide Commandments from him, *Psal. 119. 19.*

2. When Duty is discovered to you, and that it's the present season for such a Duty; Dare ye not deferr it, conferring with flesh and blood to darken a clear Duty: as many do who have no minde to obedience, taking pains that it may appear no Duty, which once was made clear; Disputing their Light into darkness, which becometh a snare to their Souls, putting Light for Darkness and darkness for Light, *Isai. 5. 20.* But if the Laws of God be so written in thy heart, that thou *makes haste and delays not to keep his Commandments,* as *Psal. 119. 60.* Then thou art in the way to the same Comfort expressed, *verse 57. Thou art my portion O Lord.*

3. Is it not the desire of thy Soul to be always in some obedience to God. *Psal. 119. 44. I will keep thy Law continually,* art thou afraid to be out of path of Duty at any time? never thinking thy self safe but when thou art obeying God? even in thy worldly concerns or whatever thou hast to do? And canst thou go from one Duty to another willingly as the Lord directeth? though thou be engaged in a Duty very pleasant to thee, yet if the Lord call thee to another, thou goest not grudgingly to it, not wishing in thy heart that God had not Commanded it, but judging all his Commandments to be Right, *Psal. 119. 128.* Thou dare not carve out thy own work, thou dare not be wiser than thy Lord, saying such a piece of work would do better than that he requires; for to be a follower of

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of God is sufficient to thee, this is the Principle of his Children as *Eph. 5. 1.*

4. Hath God made thee serious and frequent in Prayer, that he would teach thee to do his will, not only to know it, but do it. *Psal. 143. 10. Teach me to do thy will.* Dost thou improve the Promise of the new Covenant for new Obedience. I will write my Laws in their heart, *Heb. 8. 10.* and drawest grace out of Christs fulness for doing of his will, *John 1. 16.* Go then and get more where he Offereth himself.

5. Is it the Rejoycing of thy heart when God helpeth thee to obey, with Spiritual cheerful Gospel obedience, when he maketh thy feet as Hinds, *Psal. 18. 33.* So that thou runnest, and dost not weary, and if thou find thou hast not Obeyed God from the heart in any Duty, though men should give thee applause, and be saying God appeared in such a performance; yet thy heart is heavy and ready to sink within thee, for want of the Testimony of a good Conscience, knowing thou didst not serve God in Spirit? Dost thou frame thy duties for Gods Eye, and not for mans? Is pleasing of him thy Study? canst thou safely averr it with any confidence in the sight of God, that notwithstanding of many failings, yet it is thy constant endeavour to please him, then thou mayest have Confidence toward God, *1 Joh. 3. 21, 22. Beloved if our heart condemne us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight: And for thy Comfort whom God hath made sincere, compare this with the words of the same Apostle, 1 John 1. 8. If we say that we have no sin we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us.* Here you may see how these 2. Things consist in the same persons, 1 The sense of remaining sin, and imperfections, and yet 2. The certainty of doing these things that please God, whereupon the Conscience is comforted, and Holy Confidence ariseth: but let that still be remembred, that what we do can only be acceptable, and our selves accepted in the Beloved.

6. Dost thou take care not to be ashamed of thy Lords words? but Confessest him before men: then take comfort from what Christ saith, Mat. 10: 32. *Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven; and mind what followeth in the next, verse But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny:* and though we have not often the occasion of such publick confessions, as many Blessed witnesses had before us, yet while we converse with men on Earth, we shal still be found either confessing Christ, his words, and true godliness; or ashamed and fainting: great may be their Comfort who a vow Holiness in all companies. This is the more to be adverted, because if some Christians be permitted to keep their chambers, or much retired from Converse with men, then they obtain some measure of comfortable exactness in their Practice; but no sooner engaged in Company, but some fainting appears, shrinking from their former exactness, and failing of the Duties required in all company, sinfully forgetting God; whereby they often return with loss to their Souls, and a condemning Conscience. Therefore let the fear of being Denied by Christ, still influence thy deportment, more than fear of mens displeasure. 7. When thou art helped in some sincerity to Obey thy Lord, having a respect to all his Commands, endeavouring to act all thy obedience by Grace out of Christs Fulness, and taking delight to do his will; yet art thou not of the same mind that Christ requireth. Luke 17. 10. *When ye shal have done all these things which are Commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants:* though ye take comfort in obeying from the heart, as an evidence of Gods grace and Favour, yet dare not trust to it, as a procuring Cause of the least of your Mercies? thou thinkest in heart there is no more cause to boast of the best of thy performances, than if a man should declare himself a fool, by boasting of filthy rags: then the Grace that helpeth thee to obey, maketh thee also humble, and of the poor in spirit, who are rich and Blessed in Christs account.

This

## C H A P. I V.

*Sense of sin necessary  
before Partaking.*

The third Inference,

**T**His Blessed Ordinance of Christ being the Communion of his Body and Blood: Then Communicants are to approach it with a humble sense of their sin, as needing the Vertue of that Precious Blood.

And that this is necessary, Consider.

*First*, That if ye have not the Sense of your sin, you cannot duely regard a Crucified Christ; and so may mistake the whole work, despising his Death as of no great use for you, and so cannot and will not apply his Blood for purging away of Sin and Guilt: for thou art not sensible of Guilt: This of it self were there nothing else, will make thee eat and drink Unworthily; undervaluing that Life-giving Death, for the Communicants work is humbly and thankfully to receive a Crucified Christ Represented in that Ordinance, as knowing they perish without him.

2. If there be no humbling Sense of sin, thou shalt Partake as an hypocrite: pretending before God and men, that thou comest to Embrace Christ as the onely propitiation for thy sins; and yet there's no such thing on thy heart: Thou dost not Judge thy self so Guilty, or that ever thou provoked God to such wrath, but that less might have served; Thou felt no such a Burden of thy sin, but such as thy self could bear with great ease, thou wonderest there should be such a stirr in the World about sin, thou never committed any sin but thou hadst a Covering of thy own to cast over it; Thou couldest at any time after thy greatest abominations with the whorish Woman, Prov. 30. 20. *Wipe thy mouth and say I have done no wickedness*: If thus thou comest to the Lords Table thou wilt but receive Bread and Wine, finding need of no more.

3. If thy sin do nothing smart and wound thee, thou wants the very best Qualification of a Communicant, which is hungry after the Bread of Life, *For he satisfieth the longing soul*, Psal. 107. 9. The Lord hath his Eye upon such, more than all others. *Isai. 66. 2. But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit*; he findeth out such when others are passed by, such as are so sensible of their Guilt that they wonder that he should look upon them, any other way but to Consume them, such as are ashamed to look up to him because of their Iniquities, Psal. 40. 12. And yet are Longing for a Favourable Look, They cannot look up, and yet cannot but look up, necessity constraineth them to hang upon him for Mercy, knowing they perish without him; such as these will be Graciously Visited and Received. *Isai. 57. 15. He will revive the spirit of the Humble and revive the heart of the Contrite ones.* But thou a Stranger to these Contritions of heart, will be a Stranger also to these Revivings, and no wonder, for thou feelest no need of them, and therefore Consider.

4. That it's the way of God, first to wound, and then to Heal, Deut. 32. 39. *I wound, and I heal*: If thou didst never know any Wounding of heart for sin, what Healing canst thou either expect or value; for no wounding, and no healing, no casting down, and no raising up, no sickness, and no Physician, For the whole need not the Physician but the Sick; Thou hast no use for his coming with Healing under his Wings, Thou has nothing to Heal, he may spare his Visit until thou has more need of him, and keep his Medicines for others. Thus thou mayest sit down at the Lords Table with the Best, but Christ and thy Soul have no Merciful meeting. When the poor and needy are drawing out of Christs fulness, getting their Diseases Healed, and their Souls Restored, Thou art sent away Empty, neither art thou Disappointed for thou sought after no more; Thou canst not complain of Christ, for he Refused thee nothing thou sought, Thou art like these, *Rev. 3. 17. I have need of nothing.*

5. Consider also, that of all the meetings between Christ and poor sinners on this Earth, this is the most Endearing and Comfortable, when Sense of deep Guilt and deep Mercy meet together: some times the poor sinner is ready to sink under the weight of Guilt, it's a Burden they cannot bear, the Fear of Gods Wrath and Separation from him being intollerable; The Soul chusing rather if possible to be Reduced to nothing; and some times ready to Cry out, O happy no Beings, being compared with me, they shal have no Anguish, but my Anguish I can neither bear nor escape, no Mountains can cover me from my Judge, no Death will extinguish my Pain, but if I die in my sins my pain shal never Die, Death will flee from me: when thus the the poor sinner is Bruised and can stand no longer, how Gracious is that Message, as Job 33. 24 *Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.* And Ezek. 16. 6. *I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. I die for thee that thou mayest not die.* I am come that thou mayest have Life; then the Blessing of these who were ready to perish are poured out upon the Ransomer. Then as Mic. 7. 18 *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity.* The deeper thy Sense of Guilt be, being joyn'd with some hope of Mercy, thou art in the surer way for the rich Consolations of God, they that Sowe in Tears shal reap in Joy, the Lord hath appointed the Garment of Praise after the spirit of Heaviness, *Isai. 61. 3.*

6 And though thou has no fear of Wrath; having ground to hope that thou art Reconciled to God by the Blood of Christ: Yet come humbly because, thy sins are against such Streams of Mercy runing upon thee, and passing by others; thou knowest that thou hast never lived Suitable to the Greatness of thy Mercy, never fully payed thy Vows, never Glorified God in body and spirit, as it became one not his own but Bought with a Price, much is required of thee, because much is given thee; let the Sense of this go deeper in thy heart; for if hope of Pardon make thy sin easie; thou has cause to suspect both thy self and thy hope:

hope : There are no Convictions should be more humbling than foolish requiting of the Lord, and no Grief more grieving than grieving of his Spirit, who minded our griefs and knew our Souls in adversities : Thou wilt not want Matter of humbling to take with thee to the Lords Table and need of Renewed Application of that Precious Blood, If thou open thine eyes to see thy way, *Jer. 2. 23.*

7. Come humbly in the Sense of thy sin ; that thou mayest value the least of Mercy and the very Crumbs that fall from his Table, and if such a full Cup of Consolation be not poured out to thee as to others, or as at other times to thy self ; yet to Justifie God in thy heart not thinking thou hast hard measure, not wondering if he hide his face from thee, but rather wondring if it shine upon thee, considering thy Provocations : This true Sense of thy unworthiness will make thee think, O that I may have a Cup of Salvation when I go to his Table, whether it be a Cup of present Consolation or not.

And that thou may'st approach with some humbling sense of thy sin. Consider, that there must be some more deadly poison in sin, than we do apprehend, when no less doth expiate the guilt, than that Blood, which is called the Blood of God, that no other Sacrifice nor Offering could avail. Study O Christian to know more of the demerit of sin, the greatness of the Justice of God, that would accept of no other Atonement, and the greatness of thy deliverance ; if thou art now a Believer, that the weight of wrath is not come upon thee ; And think with thyself, thou by thy sins pierced him, thou brought blessed Jesus to sweat these drops of Blood, thou pressed on him with the weight of thy sins, until he cryeth out, *My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me.* Canst thou want a humbling sense of sin, and think this was for thee ? Canst thou yet mind it, and not mourn ? What hateful hearts have we, that are not more pierced with the piercing of Christ, and a wonder, if many of us find an interest in that Death, wherewith we are so little concerned,



2. Be Particular and Impartial, in searching out the Aggravations of thy Sin, from thy Youth up; and when convictions arise in thy Conscience, choke them not, but intertain them as a Mercy, until they be ripened for gracious humbling. Thou may'st soon lay aside thy convictions, but not so soon take them up again, it may be God gave thee the mercy of many Convictions, but thy love to sin has mastered them all, that now thy Conscience lets thee sin with ease, being seared, and thy heart hardned; and no wonder for many wakenings of Conscience that still end in security, makes our hearts as the Iron, many heats, and many cools, makes the Iron harder.

3. But when none of thy Meditations, or Convictions can soften thy heart, but thou can behold thy sin, and not grieve, and often confess it, yet canst not mourn, never get thy heart poured out to God, except some weight of Affliction press thee, and then thou wilt pour out a prayer when the Lord is chastening thee, and when thy affliction is over, the pouring out of thy heart is at an end: I say, when nothing prevaileth with thy obdured heart, yet bless God, that there is a promised spirit of mourning, *Zech. 12. 10. They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.* Cry to God for this help, that thou may'st go to this blessed Ordinance, as is expressed, *Jer. 50. 4. going and weeping,* and verse 5. *joyn thy self to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant.*

## CHAP. V.

*Communion with Christ should be known,  
before Partaking.*

The fourth Inference,

**I**F that the worthy Receiver at the Lords Table obtain the Communion of his Body, and Blood: then Communicants are obliged to understand what that is which is called Communion with Christ, before they Partake; lest they be found ignorant of it when they Partake: Consider then that true Communion with Christ being the happiness and honour of all who obtain it, meriteth the

the greatest seriousness, to know how sinful Mortals partake of it: And though it be wonderful, yet the exceeding riches of free Grace hath made it sure: for Believers have the priviledge of entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and so obtain a more gracious nearness to God, than those who remain only in the outer Court: and that this may appear for the incouragement of those who still retain a value for it, but fears that this fellowship is reserved wholly for a better life; I shal by the help of God, shew first that Believers in this life partake a peculiar and intimate fellowship with Christ. *Secondly* It's preparatory Antecedents, whereby they are brought unto it. And *Thirdly*, Wherein it consisteth, and the way how it's enjoyed, so far as God giveth to understand it, I can promise the Reader no more.

For the *First*, This blessed Communion with the Lord, is not only Commanded both in the Old and New Testament, *Micah 6. 8. walk humbly with thy God. Job. 15. 4. Abide in me, & I in you*: & so is made the plain Duty of the People of God to seek after it, but is also promised, *Psal. 140. 13. The upright shall dwell in thy presence, Job. 14. 23. We will come unto him, and make our abode with him*; So that Believers may expect success to their Prayers, and endeavours after Communion with God, *For faithful is he who hath promised, Heb. 10. 23.*

*Secondly*, The near Union that is between Christ and Believers, doth undeniably prove this Communion, he being the Head, and Believers the Body, supplied in every part by the Head, *Eph. 4. 16. He the Vine, and we the Branches, Job. 15. 5. The very design and scope of these similitudes is, to hold forth Christs continued Communications, and the Believers Participation.*

*Thirdly*, The experience of the godly who have published it doth also prove its certainty, *1 John 1. 3. And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Cant. 2. 3. I sat under his shadow with great delight.*

*Fourthly*, Believers remarking his drawing near, and withdrawings from their souls, *Cant. 5. 1. He hath come into his Garden, and Cant. 5. 6. he had withdrawn himself,*

self, Lam. 3. 57. In the day when I cryed, thou drewest near, and Psa. 13. 1. Why hidest thou thy face, &c.

*Fifthly*, This Communion with Christ, is of such necessity, that a Believer can do nothing without it, and on this account, Christ requireth his followers to abide in him, Joh. 15. 5. So that they do but discover their ignorance, and estrangement from God, who think there is no nearer Communion with him necessary, than the external administration of Ordinances, by the Word and Sacraments; for many do enjoy these externally, and do only draw near to God with their lips, and their hearts far from him, Isa. 29. 13. The godly man findeth it good to draw near to him, and so near as to find him the strength of his heart, Psa. 73. 26. That is intimate Communion indeed, to have the Lord the strength of a mans heart, Oh that our merciful God would give the understanding of this to many, who have never thought on so near a help as this; for such may well go in the strength of the Lord God to any work he requireth, himself being the strength of their heart; What if our heart be found as a dried withered branch of a Vine that is fit for no work, yet that witheredness shal not be known, when he cometh to be the strength of our heart.

*For the second thing proposed, how the People of God are brought into this Communion with Christ.*

*First*, The Fountain of it is the eternal and free love of God, whereby so many as pleased the Father are given to the Son, by that eternal, mysterious and merciful transaction between the Father and him, and by him to be redeemed and prepared for the everlasting enjoyment of God, compare Joh. 17. 6. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*, with Joh. 6: 37. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me*. He will effectually draw them into his Communion, they shall come unto me, and so must meet together. 2. According to this glorious transaction in the Covenant of Redemption, the eternal Son of God, is declared to have his delight with the Sons of men, before the foundation of the World, Prov. 8. 31. Fore-known unto God, are all his Works from the Beginning, things future being as present to his intuition; So that the Son of God hath always taken pleasure in these of the sons of

of men, who were given him of his Father. 3. Pursuant to the same transaction, and in order to its accomplishment; It pleased the Son of God often to appear before his Incarnation in the similitude of man on earth, and converse with Men as a fruit of his eternal delight in them, and a prelude of his Incarnation, as one hastening this gracious nearness, and more conspicuous Communion with him, *Gen. 32. 24. Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him, Dan. 3. 24. He appeareth as a man keeping company with the three godly men in the Furnace, and his form appeared also as the Son of God, this fourth glorious man made the place designed for torment to the three, a place of joy, and a very Paradise.* 4. In order to the same partaking of Communion with God, a Covenant of Grace is published, which is a marriage Covenant, *Isa. 54. 5. Thy maker is thine husband, 2 Cor. 11. 2. I have espoused you to one husband by vertue of this honourable relation, Believers may plead for his dwelling with them in this holy Communion.* 5. In due time the Son of God was Incarnate, taking unto him our nature, that his Fellowship might be the more agreeable to our nature, and we come the more familiarly unto him; and thereby to have the more feeling Sympathy with us, *Heb. 2. 14. Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death. and ver. 18. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* Having taken our nature, he continued for some time in the World, and conversed with men especially his own, *Joh. 1. 15. He dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory.* And though this people were not always to have his bodily presence; Yet at that time he did manifest so much of his power, meekness, patience, and mercy; that thereby he did facilitate the knowledge of spiritual Communion with him, some also beheld his glory, and had Spiritual Communion with him, while he was in the World. 6. After he had given a gracious taste of his Fellowship, and given instructions for its continuance in a spiritual manner, in his own appointed time he purchased reconciliation

conciliation for all that were given him, laying down his life for them, that being reconciled by his Blood, they might be capable of Fellowship, being agreed they might walk together, and 1. Per. 3. 18. *The just suffered for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.* and Eph. 2. 13. *But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ,* So that his suffering were to bring his People into this gracious Fellowship with God. 7, In order to their actual Fellowship with him, he qualifyeth them by pouring out of his Spirit, Ezek. 36. 26. *A new heart will I give, and a new spirit will I put within you.* Whereby they are made meet for the Masters use, as a sanctified People, 2 Tim. 2: 21. Without this, there could be no Communion with a holy God, our perverse natures being rather inclined to hide our selves from him, and say, Let the Almighty depart from us; but by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, they have the spirit of Love, whereby the desire of their soul is toward him, his Fellowship comes to be their deliberate and delectable choice; So great a change doth the spirit of Grace make, Eph. 2. 22: *In whom also you are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit.* And by the same spirit, they obtain the grace of Faith, which is a fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5. 22. And by this Faith they receive Jesus Christ himself, John 1. 12. Then we are united to Christ by receiving him, and being united to him, he dwelleth in our hearts by Faith, Eph. 3. 17. So that Communion with Christ doth infallibly follow upon our union with him, for where he is received, there he dwelleth; no wonder Faith be called precious, seing thereby we are brought into this inestimable benefit, of having Christ the hope of glory dwelling in us, not for any intrinsic worth of our Faith, but according to Rom. 4. 16. *Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace,* free grace began it, free grace carrieth it on, free grace will perfect this Communion, in placing the Believer there, whence he shal go no more out, but be for ever with the Lord, and where it began, there must its eternal center be, *Even the praise of the glory of his grace,* Eph. 1. 6.

The 3d thing is to know more particularly, wherein

this Communion with Christ doth consist, and how we partake it, which we are to consider these two ways,

*First*, As Believers are receivers only of Communications from Christ. 2. As they are made active themselves in entertaining this Communion.

For the First, Believers are said to be partakers of Christ himself, *Heb.* 3. 14. They have him, he is theirs a great interest, a great gift! Shal he not with him freely give us all things. *Rom.* 8. 32. A large Inheritance broader than the Earth, larger than the utmost Heaven of Heavens, the light and glory of the best and purest Heaven, what thought of the Worm man can apprehend aright of this Wonder? That, that one may be said to be ours, *Cant.* 2. 16. *He is mine, and I am his.* Believers partake of Christ, as to both his natures, *2 Pet.* 1. 4. We are made partakers of the Divine Nature, they partake of his love and favour, and thereby admitted to a gracious access, *Eph.* 3: 12. *In whom we have boldness, and access.* 2. They have the benefit of his Divine Attributes, Omnipotency, Wisdom, Holiness, Mercy, &c. *Ezek.* 36: 9. *For behold I am for you.* The Believer also hath the benefit of his humane Nature, *Heb.* 4. 15. *For we have not an High-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, and yet without sin.* This sweetneth and strengtheneth our Communion, as the words of the following ver. sheweth, *Let us therefore come with boldness to the throne of grace.*

2. Believers have Communion with Christ in his Offices: as to his Priestly Office, he is our Paschever Sacrificed for us, *1 Cor.* 5. 7. The Believer is blessed for ever, by that one Offering. *Heb.* 10. 4. As to this prophetic Office, Christ is the great Prophet, *Deut.* 18. 18. Whom we are to hear, *Who is made of God unto us wisdom,* *1 Cor.* 1. 30. Thus we have that benefit of an understanding to know him that is true, *1 John* 5: 20. Here also our debt by partaking of Christ is deep; for we were blind, and had remained so for ever, if he did not open the eyes of the blind. So also as he is King in Zion, *Psal.* 2. 6. And King of Saints, *Rev.* 15. 3. Thus he maketh a blessed

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sed conquest of us unto himself, making us a willing people by his power, *Psal. 110. 3.* There is no more to do when he pleaseth, but *arise and follow me*, and it's done, *Math. 9. 9.* Thus he ruleth in Believers, Subduing their iniquities. Thus his people are commanded to rejoyce greatly, because of their King, *Zech. 9. 9.* Here also Believers share deep in Communion with Christ, bearing them through the throng of enemies within & without safely to Heaven, and making themselves Kings, and Priests unto their God, *Rev. 5. 9.*

3. Our Blessed surety, and Redeemer, not only died to bring us to God, but to secure this Communion, carrieth the Believer still along with him, for in his Resurrection he hath them together with him, they are quickened together with Christ, *Eph. 2: 5.* And raised up together, *ver. 6.* That very act of power that raised him from the Dead, raiseth all his: They were dead in Sins, and while such, they were incapable of Communion with God, but by vertue of Christs Resurrection, they are quickened, and qualified, for converse with the Living God, So that there also the allowance is large, and the Communion near, being raised up together with Christ.

4. In his ascension, he doth not leave them as to Spiritual Communion with them, for when he is ascended and the World seeth him not, yet Believers by Faith see him: *Joh. 14. 19.* *The World seeth me no more, but ye see me:* and wheresoever he go *because he liveth, they shall live also;* then their Communion with him still holdeth, the influences of Life continuing upon Believers, they live with him, and see him when the World cannot see him.

5. And when he is set down at the right hand of God; yet there they are not forgot, *for he appeareth in the presence of God for them,* *Heb. 9. 24.* And continueth his Intercession, for perfecting of this blessed Communion: he ever liveth to make Intercession, the Believer hath Communion with him as his Advocat, to plead his cause before the Father; *1 Joh. 2. 1.* He hath not turned off his people on Earth, when he is exalted himself; O

happy Interest in Christs love, that nothing can separate, no increated, inconceivable pleasure and glory in the high and lofty Place, causing any forgetfulness of the poor weary Travellers, longing to be with him, but whatever they have to do there, he is ready, and will appear their Advocat and do their work: so that when they have finished their course, they shall have no more to do but enter into peace, all being friends where they go, and all this by him.

6. And when he cometh again, accompanied with his mighty Angels, to judge the World, yet Believers must still be near him; *therefore they are set on his right hand, Matth. 25. 33.* But this is not all, *for they shall be set on Thrones also, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matth. 19. 28.* They cordially consenting to his judging, and what Sentence he shall pass: neither is this all, but more is yet coming, with what humility Reverence, Sobriety, and Admiration should we think on these words following? *Joh. 17. 22. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one, and Rev. 3. 21. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my Throne:* He only who spake these words, can give us to understand them for our good and comfort, without erring by proud, vain, and dangerous imaginations; but let us observe these two things, 1. That the glory of the Believer is still to be near Christ. 2. That he who before time had his delight with the sons of men, continueth his love, untill he set them down in heavenly places together with himself: so that this blessed Communion was eternally designed, and shall be eternally enjoyed.

And now in time, is the season to have it secured, before we enter into that eternity; what pains can be sufficient for a pledg of being for ever with the Lord? Oh, that so few of men appointed to an eternity, mind where it shall be, whither with Christ, or with Devils: a little more time will discover it, and time is precious on this very account, that we are as yet called into fellowship with the Son of God, and may have hope of such a beginning of it here, *as nothing present, or to come shall*



shall separat. 1 Cor. 1. 9.

Blessed Jesus Christ hath opened a door for it by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the Vail, that is to say, *his flesh* Heb. 10. 10.

He hath opened his door, and standeth knocking: knocking at our doors for this fellowship. He hath a desire to use his Followers as Friends, and to admit them unto a comfortable Communion with him. Joh. 15. 15. *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you..* Which is not so to be understood, as if they were no more to serve him; for when they are at their best, *his servants shall serve him, and see his face;* Rev. 22. 3. and well may it serve the best of them, at their best. But the matter is, that Believers are admitted to more than the ordinary privilege of Servants, which is to have great Mysteries and Secrets communicated to them; for so our Lord explaineth it, *the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth, but I have made known to you, &c.* He sometimes openeth the very secret counsel of God to them; *the Father himself loveth you.* Joh. 16. 27. and Psal. 25. 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* This leadeth me to the second thing proposed; That Believers are made active in entertaining this communion, wherein Christ and the Believer do intimately converse together as Friends; tho' with a due distance on their part: this communion is the very life of a Believer. Gal. 2. 20. *I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:* this only maketh the Believer fruitful. Joh. 16. 4. *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the vine:* for the better understanding of this actual fellowship with Christ, I shall premit these few things.

First, That tho' the Infinite and Immense Divine Majesty, be not far from every one of us; *For in him we live, and move, and have our being,* Act. 17. 28. Yet as to his gracious presence, some are said to be far off, Ps. 73. 27. *They that are far from thee shall perish:* and we are

required to draw nigh to him, *Jam. 4. 8.* and these who were far off, are made nigh. *Eph. 2. 13.* So that these Expressions of being near unto, or far from God, are Scriptural: and therefore should not be mistaken, or stumbled at by any, on the account that God is every where present.

2. There is no special and gracious communion with Christ, where there is not first union with him by faith: some wonder they have not that communion with Christ that they read and hear of, but consider not the reason that they are not agreed, and so cannot walk together, How confidently, and I fear ignorantly, do some speak of communion with God, as if it were due to them, who as yet are incapable of it, until they be reconciled to God, there being no entering into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus.

3. After a poor sinner is united to Christ by faith, he is never altogether deprived of some communion with him, *Joh. 14. 19. Because I live, ye shall live also,* and Christ dieth no more; and *vers. 23. We will make our abode with him.* And *he that believeth shall never die.* *Joh. 11. 26.*

4. Yet every Believer is not admitted to the same degree of nearness, as to the manifestations of Gods gracious presence, every believer getteth not his face to shine with that glory as *Moses, Exod. 34. 29.* Yet he manifesteth himself to all who firmly love him. *Joh. 14. 23.*

5. The best of Believers obtain not in this life, that degree of nearness which sometimes they desire; when *Moses* got his face to shine, yet was he covered with the hand of God, and did see but his back-parts, after he had beseeched God to shew him his glory, *Exod. 33. 18, 22, 23.*

6. Nor doth one and the same Believer, enjoy the same degree of this nearness at all times; *Moses* had fellowship with God, before that time his face did shine; so the Disciples who were on the Mount, must come down and take share with other Believers, of that which was ordinary; you may be sitting under Christs shaddow with great delight this day, and in a little time crying out,

out, saw ye him whom my soul loveth, my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone. Cant. 5. 6.

7. Sometimes Believers do not discern in the very time, how near they are unto God, and he to them. Gen. 28. 18. *Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.* And sometimes he maketh them know distinctly, that they have fellowship with him, Cant. 5. 1. and and themselves can give an account of their fellowship, Cant. 3. 4. *I found him whom my soul loveth, I held him, &c.*

8. There is sometimes strengthening communion with Christ, when their comfort is not so great as at other times; Psal. 138. 3. *In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.* Here is prayer, and an answer to it, which is blessed communion with God, and is made out by the strengthening of the soul; so Paul 2 Cor. 12. 8. *He besought the Lord thrice, and obtaineth a strengthening answer* vers. 9. *My grace is sufficient for thee;* this the Lord said to him, giving it him as his answer: this also was true communion, and sometimes there is great delight in this fellowship, the Lord is free to dispose of it as he will. Cant. 2. 3. *I sat under his shadow with great delight.* Ps. 63. 7. *Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoyce.* Who can but rejoyce, when they know they are admitted to such an habitation, the wings of the Almighty spread about them: Its also seriously to be observed, that when the Children of God make mention of their great joy in communion with him, they are found usually clearing the soundness of their joy, by the gracious help that their souls partake of; so in this Scripture, because thou hast been my help, I find it was true communion I had, by the help I got; and therefore it is allowed joy. Psal. 28. 7. *My heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth.* Here is communion with the Lord, for his heart trusted, and the Lord helped; and finding this help, he greatly rejoiceth. Its necessary for the people of God to try any joy they have in holy duties, whence it ariseth: because some may have delight in acts of worship, and yet have no fellowship with God, as Isa. 58. 2. *And many are apt*

to think, if they have joy and pleasure in these duties; that then doubtless they have fellowship with God, which becometh a snare to them, not considering the deep deceit and hypocrisie of mans heart, which can easily stretch it self in the externals of Religion, and that with pleasure, that thereby they may think themselves religious, as well as to be thought so by others; this yieldeth them some delight, and so much the more, that notwithstanding of all they perform in Religion, they can reserve their lusts, and Idols of heart entire, even the whorish woman can delight in her peace-offerings to God, that she may have the more peace in her wickedness. *Prov. 7. 14, 15.* Its her delight that she can please God well enough with a show and ceremony of Religion, and her heart and practice go to her own pleasure therefore; therefore all delight in worship is not found, and will not prove fellowship with God: for natural Vivacity, the exercise of common Gifts, hope that it will please God, and sometimes hope of the applause of men, may, and doth go a great length to make these Duties pleasant, where there is neither joy in the Lord, nor sanctifying communion with him: That which is indeed the joy of the Lord, is strengthening to us, *Neh. 8. 10.* *The joy of the Lord is your strength.* And if you be admitted to gracious nearness, so as to behold him, we shall thereby be in some measure, changed into the same image, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* These spiritual advances in godliness, and conformity to the image of the Son of God, are the safest indications and proofs of the truth of our communion with God.

9. Consider also, that this Communion with God is to be found, both in our worship and walk; for where he recordeth his Name, he cometh to his people, he meeteth with them, and *blesteth them. Exod. 29. 43.* As also in their practice, *Isai. 64. 5.* *He meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness:* these things being premised, let us now consider, how this blessed Communion between Christ and believers doth appear.

*First,* There is a peculiar knowledge, that Christ and Believers have of each other, *John 10. 14.* *I am the good*

good shepherd, I know my sheep, and am known of mine; Though he knoweth all things, yet he knoweth them in a special manner, with approbation: and for his enemies, because they are rejected, he saith, *Matth 7. 23. Depart, I know you not.* And therefore he Manifesteth himself, where he designs to make abode, *Joh. 14. 21, 23. They know his voice, Cant. 2. 8. The voice of my beloved! behold he cometh: and verse 14. He knoweth their voice, Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice;* strangers who never converse, know not the voice of one another: they who are His, know His voice, that they (*will*) follow his voice, and will flie from the voice of a stranger, *Joh. 10. 45.* They know his voice when he speaketh to them by his Ordinances, and when they observe his voice, there they attend; knowing the danger of souls, to take the voice of strangers for his: they know his call and knock, *Cant. 5. 2, It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me: and he understandeth their secret moans, Jer. 31. 18. I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself,* Thus Christ and Believers have a peculiar way of acquaintance, that is unknown to others.

2. They mutually mind others in love, he hath them ever graven on the palms of his hands: *Isai. 49. 16.* And they remember him in his ways, and these the Lord meeteth with, *Isai. 64. 5. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways:* He is the good High Priest, that beareth the names of his people on his heart, and the desire of their soul goeth toward him: *Isai. 26. 8.* It is the Believers great joy, to think that he mindeth him, *Psal. 40. 17. I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me:* how satisfying is it to cordial friends, when they are assured that what ever they be, yet are affectionately minded by a friend of worth: If a man live until most of his intimate friends are gone, what a bare comfortless World do they leave him: when friends and familiars are put far from him, he sees none that he can unbosom his soul to, this maketh the World like a very wilderness to him: but here is a brother born for the day of adversity; when father  
and

and mother, or most Sympathizing friends are removed, yet he is the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever, he supplieth all; and often dearest friends are removed from Believers, that Christ himself may be their all, that himself may have their heart and fellowship more intirely; they used to run to their Sympathizing friends with every grief, and it may be before they went to Christ with it, which Christ observing in any with whom he determines fellowship, turneth the Cisterns utterly dry one way or another, and then the man must come to the Fountain, or faint: Blessed Jesus loves to be remembered by his people, he writeth a Book of remembrance, for them who thought upon his Name, *Mal. 3. 16.* Complaines when they forget him, *Jer. 2. 32.* *My people have forgotten me days without number:* But when his people come to be well acquainted with the blessings of his fellowship, *the meditation of him becomes sweet,* *Psal. 104. 34.* The love they have to him, makes remembering of him habitual, native, and in some respect easie: rather a pain to be long without thoughts of him, and the same love makes it most uneasie to be forgotten by him; it is as Death to them, if they think their Lord forgetteth them, *Psal. 88 5.* *Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more:*

3. There is pains taken for this blessed fellowship on both sides, though the unequality be greater than we can imagine; he being at the greatest Pains and Expence, who hath no need of such company, yet he is found standing and knocking at our Door, pursuing this fellowship, *Rev. 3. 20.* *Behold, I stand at the Door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* It is Communion with thee I am seeking, and let me have it: I will Sup with thee, and it shall not be at thy Charges, I will bear the Cost, all is provided, and you shall find it meat indeed: how many wonders are in this love, that the Prince of the Kings of the Earth should thus urge our nearness! as if he were to have some great Prize, is this the manner of men? Where did you ever hear.

hear of a King in possession of his Kingdom and Splendor, come to a poor mans Door, and stand there waiting for a word of him, or to let him in to do him good: I think this passeth all thoughts, but silent Admiration, yet he standeth there till he complain, *that his Locks are wet with the drops of the night*, Cant. 5. 2. This increaseth the wonder, but however wonderful, glory to God that we safely may and must believe it; on the other hand, the Believer having tasted of the blessings of his fellowship, cryeth out, *O when wilt thou come unto me?* Psal. 101. 2 and Cant. 1. 7. Let me know where thou feedest, that I may feed there, I can feed no where but where thou art, this meeting cannot but hold at last, when both are on the way to other.

4. And when the Believer doth so meet with Christ, as that he knoweth he is come, by the lifting up of his countenance, with how great joy is he received, Isa. 12. 1. *Tho' thou wast angry, yet thou hast turned away from thine anger, and comforted me; now thou art become my song and my salvation:* how meanly do they think of any pains they have been at, in seeking after him? Cant. 3. 4. *It was but a little farther that I went, and I found him whom my soul loveth.* If it were to do, I would go on tho' I should be torn by the way; for it's as life from the dead, when he cometh and bringeth healing under his wings, then it is that they sit down under his shadow with great delight, his countenance is the health of their countenance. Psal. 42. 11. Then their Graces have a reviving and a new Spring; then their Spiknard casteth forth its smell, *when the king sitteth at his table.* Cant. 1. 12. Then it is that worldly Comforts become insipid, and of no value; then it is they say, *what have I to do anymore with idols?* Hof. 14. 8. When they sit under his shadow, they know then that no idols ever gave them such entertainment; then they can say their Lines are fallen in pleasant places. What out of Heaven can be compared to that complacency between Christ and Believers, when they can without terrour, converse with God, and solace their souls in him? *He delighting in them*, Isa. 62. 4. *And they delighting in him*, Isa. 58. 14.

And

And commanded to do it, *Psal. 37. 4.* This made the godly Martyrs go through Flames chearfully to the full possession of this Fellowship.

5. In this Communion, there is great freedom on both sides: the Lord allowing them to pour out their hearts before him, *Psal. 62. 8.* And they accordingly, as *Psal. 142. 2, 3.* *I poured out my complaint before him, I shewed before him my trouble, When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.* They willingly expose all that is in their heart before him, and are content he search them, *Psal. 139. 23.* It would be an affliction to them, if their nearest friends knew all that is in their hearts; but a sincere Soul desires to conceal nothing from him, but rather desires his help to search, fearing there may be evils in them which they cannot search out themselves, they dare not proudly boast, as if nothing evil were to be found in them, but humbly beg that he would see and heal, what they see not, and so far as they know, they lay their hearts open before him, their most secret sins, complaining how they prevail against them, such evils as they could reveal to none on earth: so also their Doubts and Temptations, their Grievings, their Fears, and what they desire most, all their desire is before him, *Psal. 38. 9.* And blessed Jesus Christ is faithful to them, and free with them, both as to necessary reproofs, *I have somewhat against thee, Rev. 2. 4.*

And as to encouragement, *Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, Rev. 3. 8. and Psal. 25. 14.* He sheweth them his Covenant, he openeth it up to their understandings, and there they find all their Salvation, there they find relief as to their Sins, Doubts, and Fears, there they find their victory secured, for, *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him: and he will shew them his covenant.*

6. In this Communion, there is still desire for more nearness to Christ, *Cant. 8. 6.* *Set me as a seal upon thy heart.* What boldness of Love is? Oh, is there nothing will satisfy less than Christ's heart! They must be placed there, for his love is their happiness. 2. They desire it may be made evident for their comfort as by a Seal, that thereby



thereby they may read his desires is toward them, this secureth their comfort, when they can say, *his desire is towards me, Cant. 7. 10.* If it be thought never so great ambition, yet sincere love to Christ is kept in pain without some evidence of the love of his heart; his mercies are sweet, his graces very sweet, but his heart is sweetest of all. I question, if there be any sincere love to Christ, where this is not desired, though such an habitation, such a seat as the heart of Christ cannot be enjoyed without admiration. 3. When it's said set me as a Seal, &c. That is, ratifie, and confirm this my Interest in thee, and Communion with thee, as by a Seal, that thy love shal be my allowance, and Communion with thee, my priviledge for ever. 4. When it's said, set thou me as a Seal, is as much as an humble acknowledgement, Lord I cannot place my self where I would be, I cannot bring my own soul to this near Communion with thee, but I commit it to thee, who can draw my heart to thy heart, I trust thy efficacious power, that what ever be my natural aversness to such holy Communion, yet my heart is under thy dominion, thou canst prepare and form it for thy self, all this Salvation is thy own doing, & thou canst bear me up to this eminent part of it, to be so near as on thy heart: Therefore it's my humble request, that thou set me there, the Spouse doth not say, I will set my self there, but set thou me as a Seal &c. It's observable, that after *Moses* had near Communion with God on the Mount, yet he still preffeth for more, *Exod. 33. 13.* I beseech thee shew me thy glory. What he had obtained, did but excite his desires for more: and so it is with all who have the true beginning of Communion with God in this life, though they have it not in the manner *Moses* had, the Communications that Believers receive here are discoveries of a greater beauty and glory yet before them, & these foretasts captivate their love and desire, so as they cannot but pursue for greater discoveries, the first fruits they have found, are so sweet to their taste, that the more they get, the more they hunger, *Rom. 8. 23.*

7. That which Believers obtain in Communion with God, is so strengthening and comfortable, that the hide-

ing of his face is most bitter, *Psal. 30: 7. Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* If there be no grief of heart upon the hiding of his Face, there is just cause of fear, that such persons have not known the shining of his Face; as on the other hand, these who diligently observe the Lords withdrawing from their souls, and are forthwith pained and wounded for his absence; do thereby testify their acquaintance with the blessings of his presence, especially, if their grief be that they have provoked him to withdraw, & that his withdrawing is not only as to comfort, but as to the measure of strengthening Grace formerly allowed them, the very fear of the Lords deserting, doth often mix water in the best of their wine, that until Christ and they be at home in their Fathers Kingdom, their brightest and most serene days, are often overcast with clouds; and therefore, when they do enjoy his gracious presence, fearing some alteration, though not of their fixed gracious estate, yet of their present blessings, cry out, *Stir not up, nor awake my love, till, &c. Cant. 2. 7.* O that he would stay, and not leave my soul destitute, and when the Cloud covereth them, O what a damp it giveth, then Darkness, Jealousies, & Fears arise, as *Job 29. 1. O that I were as in moneths past, when his candle shined on my head, ver. 2, 3, 4. As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my Tabernacle, when the Almighty was yet with me.* This godly mans desires were fulfilled, for *Job 4. 2. So the Lord turned the captivity of Job, and ver. 12. blessed his latter end more than his beginning.* But many now come to old age, are almost hoplest, that they shal ever in this life be, as in the days of their youth, and decline so far, that they tempt themselves to doubt if ever the Almighty was with them, and his secret on their Tabernacle.

8. Where true Communion with God is, there its perfection is desired, not only to have that measure continued, which is here allowed, but to be for ever with the Lord, *1 Thes. 4. 18.* Here their Fellowship is but as seeing through a Glass, there it's often interrupted, as to its comforts, here a body of sin is still pressing them downward to this Earth, that they get not their Affections

ons staid and fixed on things Above, here they are surrounded with snares and temptations, such as have made strong Cedars to shake; And therefore having already the first fruits of a better Countrey, they desire to be where he is, who hath taken up their hearts to himself: For to be with Christ, they sincerely think best of all, and *Heb. 11. 16.* But now they desire a better countrey, that is an heavenly. It's not some extraordinary persons only, who are of this mind, but all true Believers, for *Rev. 22. 17.* The spirit and the bride say, Come, Christ saith, I come quickly, and they agree, even so come Lord Jesus. The crown of righteousness is laid up for all who love his appearing, *2 Tim. 4. 8.* So that it's dangerous for a Christian to want desires of this nature, for they are consistent with submission to his appointed time; but since the Crown is laid up for such as love his appearing, every Christian is concerned to try, whether the meditations of that day be his terrour or delight, these being a few of the great blessings found in Communion with God; there remaineth yet one difficulty which perplexeth some serious souls: that is how to have this blessed Communion ordinary, so as they may be said to walk with God, knowing that this walking with him is more than to perform some stated Duties of VVorship; the grounds whence this difficulty ariseth, are;

*First,* They hear and read of abideing in Christ, *Joh. 15. 4.* Setting the Lord always before our eyes, *Psal. 15. 8.* of waiting on God continually, *Hos. 12. 6.* of resorting continually unto him, *Psal. 71. 3:* When they think on such Scriptures, and withal the regard God hath to such as remember him in his ways, *Isa. 64. 5.* And such as thought on his Name, *Mal. 3. 16.* And his Indignation against these who forget God, *Psal. 50. 22.* These and the like passages being laid to heart, they think that God should be always actually remembred, & some few find great disquiet, if any considerable portion of time be spent without thoughts of God.

On the other hand, they find themselves concerned in worldly affairs, or Reading, Studying, &c. Which cannot be managed without serious and suitable thoughts to

the work they are about ; God clearly calleth them to these other things, it were sin in them to ruine their families, and neglect the duties of their station, some of which duties may require a considerable portion of time, and seriousness in that time: now their strait is how to manage these external necessary Duties, without sinful forgetting of God.

*Ans.* 1. Whatever weakness may be found in this difficulty, yet it appears to flow from a good root of love to God, and fellowship with him, it's a savoury kind of trouble, yet;

2. It's not safe for a Christian, to arraign himself for a forgetter of God, when he is serving God in the duties of his station, but;

3. It will be found, that the bitterest ingredient of this accusation is, when there is opportunity for remembering God, without obstructing any other duty, that these opportunities are not improved: and for the help of such who find trouble of this nature, as I know some for many years afflicted with it. I shal propose but these 4 things, leaving their usefulness to the blessing of God. 1. The continued exercise of the love of God, 2. Performing our external Duties as obedience to God. 3. Frequent retirements to God, and 4. many ejaculations.

For the First, The lively exercise of the love of God, makes the remembrance of him delectable; a Christian hath a great advantage, when the desire of his soul goes to it, for then he is so far from grudging that God have his affectionat thoughts, that he cannot be easily kept from them, this being one of the strong constraints of Love, to think on the object Beloved, you may observe the Spouse in the Book of *Canticles* cannot be kept long from the thoughts of her Beloved; either seeking after him, or delighting in his Fellowship, or commending him to others; Christs love is the surest Bond on the soul, to prevent sinful forgetting, and if it decay, your thoughts and meditations will decay with it; but vigorous love will make you both embrace, and seek for opportunities of converse with him, and the meditations of him sweet, *Psal.* 104. 34.

For the 2d, Even our external duties, should be performed as obedience to God: Therefore, 1. Take nothing in hand, but what is Duty. 2. And present Duty, for God hath appointed a season for every Work, *Eccl.* 3. 4. 3. Do what is Duty, because it's Duty, because God requireth it: For a man may do that which upon the matter is Duty, and yet not to do it, because God requireth it; and then he cannot be said to serve God, there is need to advert to this, for it's a great mean of peace to a mans Conscience, when he knoweth that which he hath been employed in, was the very work God called him into; and therefore he engaged in it, and though it were a worldly concern, and did take a considerable time, and intent thoughts; yet he is not to think all this time was sinfully spent, because he was not on the meditations of God all that time, for God called him to be about other things, which could not be performed without the thoughts of his mind. 4. These external affairs should be attended no longer than Duty requires: This also should be considered, lest love to the World keep your minds hanging upon them longer than need requireth, this becometh a snare, and a great obstruction to Fellowship with God; you need fear nothing that God Commandeth, will of itself marr your Spiritual good; for his Commands are, *For our good always*, *Deut.* 6, 24. But fear thy own mismanagement, and weakness in making Duties to interfere, and juggle out one another: Seek therefore to get thy heart inclined to perform his Statutes always, *Psal.* 119. 112. Be always about seasonable Duty, give no allowance to idleness, and vain thoughts; for it's mispending of time, and being out of all manner of Duty, that doth most procure these disquieting reflection; for if thou be conscientiously serving God, and working righteousness, then thou shalt find peace and quietness, as *Isa.* 22. 17. *And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever; Yea, the Lord will meet with thee, when thou art performing works of righteousness, Isa.* 64. 5. Thy acting of Justice and performing Duties to men, shal not obstruct thy Fellowship with God, for he meeteth with such.

For the third Help which is frequent retiring to God in Secret Worship, pray always *Luke 18/1.* and *1 Thess. 5. 17.* *Pray without ceasing*, this requireth more than only a Praying disposition, for a meer disposition is not the acting of Prayer which is required, though I grant this disposition is required in the Command of Praying always; and if there be not a disposition and willingness, Prayer will soon be but a burden, and if there be an inclination and disposition, Prayer will be frequent where God giveth an opportunity, *David* not only Prayeth three times a day, *Psal. 55. 17.* but prayeth seven times a day, *Psal. 119. 164.* which appeareth to be stated ordinary times for Worship daily: there is great guilt on many for seldom praying, who have times at will, & sometimes knows not how to spend it; they can tell you they weary, they think long, they know not what to fall about, how to put off time, they will go to such a place or such a company only to put off time, and yet very seldom retiring to secret Prayer: have you no concerns with God? have ye all the Communion with him that ye desire? have ye nothing to ask of him? or nothing to Praise him for? how Just will it be with God to cut thee out of these opportunities, either by sudden Death, or cast thee in such Sickness and pain, that it shal be more than thou canst to bear thy Affliction, and hopelessly wish for such full opportunities of Conversing with God, as formerly thou hadst, some of you have now your chambers at command, your meat and drink provided seasonably for you, and your worldly business not thronging you: yet you will go any where rather than to God, frequent Retirements to God when sincere are a great part of this Communion with him, while we are on Earth, and prevent long forgetting of God, are a help to have our Conversation such as becometh those who are often to come before him, a great mean to keep the Conscience in ordinary awe of God, & to understand how it is between him and our souls, to obtain help for present Duty, or trials, and to be Spiritually minded which is life and peace, and to make Christi-

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and savoury and profitable to one another as relishing the company where they resort.

The 4th. Help for this Communion with God in our walk, is frequent ejaculatory prayer : when there is not opportunity for retireing to Worship, these may be very numerous, and are more numerous than can be well counted by a walk with God, who hath acquired a gracious habit of making his request known to God in every thing, *Phil. 4. 6.* by this kind of Prayer, a man may often minde God, without any detriment or prejudice to his other concerns, the Motions of the soul being swift, when *Jacob* is predisting the Lot of his Children, *Gen. 49. 18.* and speaking to them, there's no loss to his work by that pathetick and pertinent Meditation such as do all their works in the Lord, cannot but frequently mind him. Pious *Nehemiah* 2. 4. when in the presence of a great Monarch, hath his short Prayer to the God of heaven, there being no season then for retiring and Bowing his knee to his Maker; yet he will not manage his Design without some application to God; no company could keep him from his God, on whom his dependance was, *This Example might Instruct in Many Things, for* 1. *Nehemiah* had Prayed before, for Success in the first Chap: and particularly that God would grant him Mercy in the sight of that man, *v. 11.* Yet now in the presence of the King he prayeth again, many such as we would be ready to think we have prayed for this already, what needeth more prayer, and there's no opportunity for prayer now, and so let it alone, but he will not utter his Request till he pray again, 2. He was Surprised with the King's unexpected demand *verse 4. For what dost thou make request; When ever we are surprised, we should go first to God, whatever company we are in.* 3. He was in great fear, Chap. 2. 2. *Then I was very sore afraid, and therefore betaketh himself immediately to God as a present Help and Refuge, and if we would do so in our fears, it would much strengthen our Communion with God.* 4. That which he was concern'd in was of great Consequence, and therefore besought God to be concerned in it, neither should we attempt any thing of moment without application

*tion to God, this would be another Help to prevent our forgetting of God.* 5. Here was an opportunity offered for doing good, and he must go to God for Direction, how to manage it, his Design was now much Ripened, when the King desires to know his Request, and lest by his weakness he should obstruct the good of others, he Addresseth himself to God for Counsel, so should we when ever, and wheresoever occasion Offereth to be useful in the Word, this would be another Help to keep us near God, many such occasions Offer which are sinfully neglected, I say Occasions for being Profitable, though not in that manner, of *Nehemiah* 6. Here is a present Duty must be performed immediately, *Nehemiah* must now speak, there was no Deferring of his Answer, but he appeareth, Self Deemed not, daring to Trust his own Understanding, and therefore must needs go to God with it, what shall I speak, he had been at this time an accomplished Courteour and Favourite, and admitted near the King's Person, yet he will not Trust his Parts or Elocution; but he will Trust his God, here also is another profitable Example that when men are clearly called to speak, either before few or many, and have not time to premeditate, yet there ought to be a serious humble looking up to God for his Assistance, what ever be mens Station in the World, no doubt Humility is a Mother of many Prayers, and if this Example were followed, how Blessed a Help would it be for frequent Remembring God, these are but a taste of the many Occasions we have for these short Ejaculatory Prayers, which will do hurt to no mans other concerns in the World, but are a great Help to Communion with God.

CHAP. VI.



## C H A P. VI.

*Pertinent Meditations in the time of Commu-  
nating.*

## The fifth Inference,

**S**eing such Blessed and near Communion with Christ may be obtained at the Lord's Table, then Communicants should prepare for entertaining Communion with him in the time of that Solemnity, after serious preparation great Diligence is necessary, that this Holy Ordinance be managed on our part in an acceptable manner, that we may find it a true Communion with Christ, suitable to it's name, and of all Communicants they have the most peculiar advantage, who are acquainted with Communion with God before they come to the Lord's Table; for except there be some admirable work of power and Mercy, men will surely profane the Sacrament, who have their Fellowship with Christ then to begin, not knowing how to receive Christ when they receive these Sacred signs, or how to Feed upon him: I say without some great work of God's Mercy, for we must still leave place for Sovereign Power and Mercy, who can not only Confirm such as have doubted of their Fellowship with God; but even then give it a Being which had no Being before; and in one day or hour give both Faith and Fellowship with God: yet this is no Warrant for any to presume without endeavouring both Faith and Fellowship before they come to the Lord's Table.

It should also be remarked that many godly persons find themselves at a great loss when they come to the Lord's Table, by not knowing how to act their part distinctly in Communicating, and though they have made some Conscience of Preparation before, yet complains they act but confusedly in the very time of the Solemn Action, which doth much obstruct their Peace and Comfort,

Comfort, yea, though they dare not Charge themselves with Hypocrisie as to their desires for Communion with Christ, or that they were altogether in concern'd in Partaking; yet not knowing what Meditations were most suitable in the time of Partaking, and wandring from one thought to another without fixing on that which was most proper for the work, do often fall into impertinencies alien to the great work in hand, which being Reflected upon, giveth such a Wound to their Conscience, that the day or hour which should have been the time of their great Joy, is turned into Grief and Complaints: and that which will appear strange unto Strangers to these things, that some find more difficulty to be Compos'd in their minds in the very time of that Solemnity, than they found before they came to it; whereby they are Surprised and fall into great Consternation, that when the Soul should have been most United, Fixed, and elevated for Communion with Christ, that than their thoughts should be a gathering: though possibly the things they were thinking of were Pious and Good in themselves, but altogether unseasonable: such would Consider that Feeding on Christ is so excellent and profitable for the Soul, and so Destructive for Satan's Interest, that no Devices or Temptations will be wanting to frustrate that Profite; and therefore should be Guarded against, not onely to Resist Temptations in the time, or any thing Impertinent to the Work in hand, but withall before we come to Partake, this should have a peculiar Consideration, how we should Act in the time of that Solemn Action: and who knoweth but the Neglect of this part of Preparation may provock God to let us find our own Weakness to our Grief, if we be so proud as to think we can Act the Most Solemn part of the Work of our selves, without any Preparation, therefore it will be found our Duty both to Pray, and Meditate before hand, how to be Employed in the time of Receiving; and such are in a special manner concerned to notice this who have Smarted already for it's Neglect, complaining that God had Deserted them, for

no other reason but because of their Impertinent wandering at the Lord's Table.

And for your help in this part of the Work, how to Act your part of this Holy Communion, I shall propose by the Lord's help, a few things to your Consideration, I say how to Act, lest any should say there's no Acting required of us but only Receiving: but such would Consider, that our Receiving of Christ is the Acting of Faith, as is clear from *John 1. 12* Wherein also Love to our Blessed Redeemer must be Acted, so that we must Act our part in this Holy Communion, if we expect the Benefite for which also we should be active in Praises.

*First*, Then when we are to enter on this Blessed Duty, we should humbly request for the Lord's Assistance and Presence with us, that our hearts may be Established by his Grace, and kept close to the Work; this should be done were there never so many about you.

2. It's necessary also that what the Lord sendeth by his Messengers for clearing the Nature of the Sacrament be Diligently hearkened unto; and I do the rather mind you of this, because some do then shut their ears from attending to any thing spoken, being wholly taken up with thoughts of their own: I am not yet speaking of the very Instant of Receiving, for at that time People must be exercised with their own Meditations, and should not be diverted with many Words, but that which I say, is that before the Sacred Action be engaged, some take a liberty to Neglect all they hear, attending only to their own secret thoughts and debates: but this is not the seasonable Work, for if it be Ministers Duty to Preach, and open up the Nature of the Sacrament, and teach the Duty of Communicants, then it's the Peoples Duty to hearken, not knowing but the Lord will Direct that unto them, which may either clear their present Doubts, or set them on some more seasonable Work than that where-with they are at present Exercised,

3. When ye are entering the Work labour to come to it cheerfully and thankfully, Blessing God you have

so Blessed a Work to go to, as actual Solemn Communion with Christ, and that the Lord himself hath brought you into the Banqueting-house, *Cant. 2. 4. He brought me to the Banqueting-house.* This is Comfortable when a Communicant is so far cleared, that the Lord hath brought him there, begin it with hope of a comfortable meeting with Christ; it's a feast of Love wherein thou a Believer and lover of him mayest find his Banner of Love spread over thee, and himself a covert from the Tempest of all Temptations that may assault thee.

4. When thou art to Partake that thy Meditations may be Pertinent and suitable to this Holy Action, labour to have thy thoughts agreeable to the Institution itself, considering the Elements and what they Represent, and pondering the very Words of the Institution, because these Words of Christ's Institution point out thy present work, and what should be the nature of thy Meditations; nor canst thou partake aright if thy mind be not Exercised with what Christ speaketh in that Action, besides that, this will be the Blessing of God an hedge in the way, to keep thee from Impertinent excursions, and unseasonable thoughts, but no hedge to the Breathings of God's Spirit or Limiting of him, for thou art to expect most of the Spirit's help when thou art clost at thy Duty, and this is the present Duty to Meditate on the Words of Christ spoken by him at the Celebration of this Ordinance, and to be suitably affected with them.

5. And more particularly when thou seest the Bread broken, and readeest or hearest that word, *this is my Body which is broken*, then thou art to Meditate on Christ Crucified his Blessed broken Body, and Bleeding Wounds, and so to Behold him as in exquisite pain, Crying out of being Forsaken, Mocked, and Tempted by the Wicked to come out of that pain, and relinquish the work, *Mat. 27. 48. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.* Thus we are to Behold him, and Mourn for the deep hand we had in all his Sufferings, we having Pierced him, are obliged to Look and

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and Mourn, and this mourning with Admiration of that Love that provided so Costly a Remedy for us, and leaning to him who made his Soul an Offering for sin is a part of our acting this Blessed Communion with Christ.

6. When thou hearest that Blessed Word (take) and that by taking the Bread, thou art to take Christ himself; here thou art to Meditate on the Great Offer made to thee, and to Believe in thine heart, that now the Redeemer and Saviour of the World Offereth Himself to thee, and requireth thee to take Him; as He gave Himself for thee, so now He giveth himself unto thee: this giving, and thy Receiving is the very Acting of this Blessed Communion, He giveth Himself to be thine for ever, and so thou Receives; He gives Himself intirely with all His Purchase, and so thou by Faith Receives, thou comest with the Sense of thy Sin and Guilt, and He giveth the Benefit of His Blood to Cleanse thee from all Sin; Thou comest with the Sense of thy Diseases and thy Sins often prevailing against thee, and out of Hisfulness thou receivest Grace; by Receiving Him thou hast a Right to all the Blessings purchased as thy need Requires here, and a Right to Glory, which in due time thou shalt Possess, setting thee down together with Him in Heavenly places, *Eph. 2. 6.* O Blessed Communion begun here on Earth, and shortly to be perfected in that Eternal Communion where there shall be no more paining distance.

7. When thou hearest that Word (eat) and thereby Christ saying take me into thy heart, eat, and be Satisfied, now fill thy hungry Soul, eat abundantly, make Room, open for me, *I will come in and sup with thee*, and the Meat shall be my Flesh, *Meat indeed*: What a pain is it sometimes to a Believer that he cannot duely value this Love, even when he valueth it most; and therefore will Eat and Wonder, and VVonder and Eat, but dare not for all his wondering say Lord it's too Good for me, I dare not touch or eat it, no no faith the Believer my Life is in it, I cannot want it, let His gifts be like Himself, though I be still like my self

meer nought : I find Him saying, if I eat not His Flesh I have no Life in me, *John 6. 53.* Therefore I will choose Life and Eat ; and whatever may be said of eating of Christ's Flesh when a man believeth, yet I will eat in this manner, because he Requireth it, He hath opened my heart and prepared His place in my Soul, **○** let him come and Possess His own Conquest, and since he alloweth to take and eat, I will do it, I will take Him into my very heart, that I may Live, and Live to Him for ever, and I do Request Him to take deep Possession of all the Powers of my Soul by the Graces of his Spirit, and animate them all for His Service, as meat is diffused through the Body, for it's service. Here is intimate Communion with Christ in His Ordinance.

8. VVhen that overcoming word is heard ( for you ) broken for you ; Christ Himself making Application of the great Sacrifice to thee, as this goeth deepest into the heart, so it raiseth the greatest Admiration that it was for me even for me, who was not only worthless, but a Rebel and dishonourer of Him; this cutteth through the heart, giving it a deep Loves wound, was I then in His thoughts and upon his heart ? and did He thus Suffer for me who acted against Him for so many years ? and resisted as I could His Love, when pursued by it ? what shal I now render to the Lord, what can I render, what have I to render, but what is His own ? and that same I often keep back, how good is it that by what I now receive I shal be qualified to Extoll His Love in another manner, and in a better place, though my Praises cannot through Eternity recompense His Love, for He is above our Blessing and praise, only I shal take pleasure to Sound out His Praises before Angels and men, when I am taught the Song of the Lamb ; I am this day deep Debitour to His Love, and shal be so for ever, I shal Glory in it, and spend, but cannot out-spend Eternity in acknowledging this Debt, that His Precious Body was Broken for me, and Himself allowing me now to Believe it : This is also a part of the Believers Communion with Christ at His Table.

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9. VVhen thou hearest these words, *This do in Remembrance of Me.* I Consider who Requireth this, is it not He who Remembred me in my low estate, wallowing in my Blood, and no eye to pity me but His, Remembring me when I was not remembring my self, nor come to my self to consider my forlorn estate, when my wretched self, and all the World about, me would let me Sink into the Pit whence there is no Redemption, no man caring for my Soul, is not this He who Remembreth me still? hath He not mercifully Remembred me this day in bringing me here where I find the Bread of Life? hath he not now made me taste of that Tree of Life which shal be food for ever? and all by His Gracious Remembring of me, and shal I not Remember His Love more than Wine, no thanks to me, O Lord to Remember Thee, and thy Love, hadst thou required me to pass through some flames of a Hell, it were my part to essay it at thy Command, how much more when I have nothing but Love to remember, shal not I remember thy unquenchable Love, who hast rescued me from unquenchable Flames? I have many times VVretchedly done what I could to quench thy Love, but many waters hath not done it, I do remember it Lord, and through thy Grace will remember it, and I will do this which thou now Requirest in remembrance of Thee and Thy love, giving Thee thanks for Commanding it, and had I nothing else to do in this Ordinance, yet by Thy grace Thy gracious Command shal be Answered, though in great weakness. Here also is another part of this Blessed Communion, Christ requiring remembrance, and the Believer cordially yielding it.

10. And when thou hearest of the shewing forth of His Death, which Christ is not ashamed of, but will have it in this manner Published; then saith the Believer, that Death brought Life to my Soul, that Death hath overcome Death for me, that now I may say O Death where is thy Sting, by this Death is the Death of Deaths, Hos. 13. 14. *O Death I will be thy plague,* and 1 Cor. 15. 54. *Death is swallowed up in victory.* Death was long my ter-

rou, and kept me in Bondage, not knowing what hour the first and the second Death might surprise me together, now when I must go through that Passage I hope to fear no evil, Christ hath Sweetned the Passage, made it no Enemy, but a necessary step for putting off Corruption, that I may be Cloathed with incorruption, there shal be no Prints of Sin or Death seen upon me, no spot or wrinkle by the shrugs of Death, I shal take no stench of Death with me where I go, and all this by His Death who was Slain and is Alive: I will this day apply it thankfully, and Solemnly shew it Forth: Christ Crucified being my Glory, and He who bringeth me to Glory; desiring in my Soul that His Death were shewed Forth, from the Rising to the Setting of the Sun. Here also is a part of this Blessed Communion, Christ Requiring His Death to be shew'd Forth, and the Believer cordially performing it.

II. VVhen the Believer heareth that the Cup is the New Testament in His Blood: Considering that by the Death of the Testator, the Testament is of Force, *Heb. 9. 16, 17.* The Believer Interested in the Legacy, may now with Confidence expect what is bequathed, for the Testament thus Confirmed cannot be Disannulled, *Gal. 3. 15.* Then saith the Believer, I will glve Credit to the Tokens and Pledges devised by Himself for my Confirmation; He requireth me to take them as such, and so I receive them from Him who is Faithful. I will from henceforth expect all the Promised Blessings that I stand in need of, for in this Covenant or Testament is all my Salvation; Christ hath made all sure by His Death, and now He hath made all sure to me by His Seal: I dare not distrust His Seal or Pledges, He hath made me a Believer, He hath this day given me to believe in Christ Crucified, I have Received Him according to His Offer, He hath given me power to become one of the Children of God, His Testament therefore is for me, and it's Seal sealeth me up unto the day of Redemption, and here is a comfortable part of this Communion with Christ, He giveth the Pledges and Seal of His Testament, and the Believer joyfully receiving them as such,



such, and Rendering Him Praise; the Believer resolving now to go to Death in humble confidence, *That the Lord hath made an everlasting Covenant with him, ordered in all things, and sure.*

These are but a taste of the seasonable Meditations in the time of Partaking, and a Help for preventing Impertinent wanderings of the Mind; and though a Communicant reach not all such particular Meditations at one time, yet one or more suitable serious Meditations on Christ's words of Institution, will be found by the Blessing of God a mean to keep the Soul at that work, which God then Requireth, and so prevent the wounding Reflections of many after they have Communicated: for it must be supposed that every Godly Communicant will review the way how his Soul was Employed at the Lord's Table, and if he find that his Meditations were not opposit to the work, it cannot but make a very bitter Reflection.

Know also that these Meditations already hinted, are but for putting some weak People in mind to keep close by the Institution, lest their thoughts go off their Work; but no ways intended as any Restriction or Limiting of Communicants (except from wandring) for if Christ manifest Himself and entertain thee with His Loves, thou wilt not need such Helps, for He can soon Elevate thy Soul into such Meditations, affections and Joy, by the Breathings of His Spirit, as thy self cannot Express, and all of them suitable to the Blessed work thou art about.

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## CHAP. VII.

*Believers should desire to Partake of this Communion.*

The sixth Inference;

**T**HIS Blessed Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood then Believers

lievers are obliged to have a sincere and an earnest desire to partake of so great a Mercy.

*And that we should desire this great Benefit,* Consider,

*First,* The Lord Commandeth it, and therefore we should have a desire and a delight to do His will, we may not chuse or refuse as our inclination leadeth, which appeareth to be the Errour of many, not Considering that the Lord will call to an account what Regard is testified to so Gracious a Command: which is to be lamented that so many make their Humours their Rule, they have not a mind to it, it's not their present desire and so lay it aside: forgetting that it should be their desire, because of Christ's Merciful Command.

2. Because it's a Feast of pure Love on Christ's part, therefore it should be desired: it was His Love that laid it's Foundation in laying down His Life. 2. It's His Love to appoint such a Memorial of it. 3. His Love & the Tokens of it then to be Communicated to Believers in a special manner: Can there be Love where there is no desire to meet with Love and entertain it? Consider what is to be your Feast, *the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the World*, if this be believed in heart, how can ye but hunger and desire to eat? for such Food will not be always in your Offer; give praise that ever ye had the Offer of that which will make you praise for ever, and be satisfying to thy Soul when all other things fail thee, Psal. 22. 26. *The meek shall eat and be satisfied*: Can ye with peace keep your selves out of the way, where such an Offer is made? know ye not that the Receiving of Christ is your begun Eternal-happiness? which neither Death nor any thing else shall deprive you of? if thou say thou hast received Him already in another manner, & dost hope to be Blessed in Him for ever, though thou never Receive Him at the Lord's Table. I would Answer that thou art the more Ingrate, who dost not desire to Receive Him afresh in the manner He hath appointed: Art thou weary of Receiving Him? didst thou get such a fill of Him before that thou desirest to Receive Him no more? this is ground sufficient to make thee suspect thou didst never yet Receive Him, if thou  
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be wearied of it, for thy heart should be still open to Christ.

3. Is it not Communion with Christ thou art dayly Praying for? and if thou prayest in sincerity, then it should Elevate thy heart to hear of His appointments for obtaining it; when he saith in such an Ordinance I am to be present in a peculiar manner, allowing you a most intimate fellowship, as near as you can expect in this Life; there thou mayest expect the return of thy Prayers; and if thou hast no regard to it thou rendrest thy self and Prayers suspicable of meer Hypocrisie, wilt thou not be ashamed to call thy self a praying Christian for fellowship with Christ, and yet have no desire to be there where thou mayest meet Him and have Him? dost thou not often say, *O that I knew where I might find him!* Job 23. 3. He answereth in this Ordinance I will be present, giving my Self and my Loves: if thou regard not this, and yet has no desire to be where He is, what can thy self judge of thy Prayers but as words of course, and flattering God with thy lips? beware of bewraying thy estrangement to Christ as one that has never seen Him, in any part of His Beauty, lest thou be of these who say, as Isai. 53. 2. *There is no beauty that we should desire him.*

4. The Love we owe to the Glory of our Blessed Redeemer obligeth to this desire, of shewing it forth in the manner He hath appointed: yet on this account also many are Guilty by the neglect of this Ordinance: for these Dangerous mistakes are too much rooted in many, thinking because they receive Christ at any time when they Believe, therefore they need not be solicitous for Receiving Him at His Table; and because they may Render Him Glory at other times for His Love in Dying, therefore they need not go to the Lords Supper to perform it: but these thoughts involve you in great Guilt, for however frequent thy praises be at other times, why would thou presume to be wiser than thy Lord? who hath appointed this Publick Solemn manner of performing it? Darest thou say in His face Lord I think this way of shewing forth thy Death needless, I think a more privat way may serve? wilt thou Impudently advance

advance thy own wisdom as above His ? whether doth He or thou know best which way He is to be Glorified , whether art thou to give Him Rules or to be Ruled by Him ? if thou wilt be so arrogant as to plead that thou knowest better how to do thy Duty, than he can teach thee ; it's no wonder thou have no desire for the Lords Supper ; but rather if thou canst regard any Gospel Ordinance, since thou art wise enough to teach thy self : Think with thy self, I must once compear before my Judge, the same blessed Redeemer who requires his Death to be shewed forth, what shal I answer, when thus charged by him ; the just died for the unjust, I submitted to agony in my soul, and torments in my body, to relieve poor sinners from eternal torments ; thus my Death was the reconciliation of the whole Elect World, who thereby now stand upright in Judgement ; I required, that this my Death should be shewed forth unto this day, that I am come again : But here is a man that thought it not necessary, to render me that publick honour. What can be thy answer , but speechless consternation ? Think also with thy self, if I expect reconciliation with God by that precious Death, how can I refuse, Nay, should I not rejoyce to publish that love, especially in so comfortable a manner, as in Communion with Christ, and his Saints on earth ; and contribute my mite to keep its memory fresh and fragrant in the world : It's great ingratitude to have no longings for this Ordinance ; yet it appears, that if some were placed in such circumstances, as no occasion offered, it would be no great grief of heart to them ; or if occasion offer, but it may be at some distance, occasioning bodily trouble in attending, they can easily forego it ; though perhaps performing longer journeys at the same time to other places : or if opportunity offer in the place of their residence, yet it cometh undesired ; and a very trifle shal detain some from partaking ; and all this , because there is no love and desire of soul after it : I speak not this of all, but it's shameful to be found in any professing Christian, and so much the more , because our blessed Redeemer testified so great regard to this

this Ordinance, that when he was immediately to engage his deepest sufferings; yet even then he would have this Feast of Love celebrated, and fixed for after generations. Shal our Saviour testifie so great desire for our good, and we have no desire to receive it? Shal we so undervalue that Love, which can neither be overvalued, nor duely valued? *Luke 22. 15. And he said unto them, with desire have I desired to eat this passeover with you before I suffer:* Appointing this Communion of his Body and Blood to continue until he come again.

5ly, If thou be a Christian indeed, then thou art duely praying for grace to strengthen thee for the Duties thou must perform, for Strength against thy secret or open sins, for strength against Temptations, from thy own heart, or from Satan and his Instruments, for strength to bear thy afflictions, and grace to carry Christianly under thy trials; therefore thou should desire to be there, where he is to be received, who shal be the strength of thy heart: Art thou not often fainting, both in thy Duty and Trials? Then believe in thine heart, that Christ is that true bread of life, *Joh. 6. 48.* Hereby thou shal be strengthened for Duties far above thy own strength, hereby thou shalt be enabled to cut thy way through the greatest difficulties; Thy Redeemer is thy strength, *Psal. 19. 14.* Thou art to receive that which will make thee a lively Christian, for the honour of thy Lord, refusing nothing he commandeth, and sinking under no burden he layeth on thy back: Great is the mercy to believe this strength, and great is the loss of our souls, when that strength is but thought upon, as an uncertain may be. Remember Christian, and believe in thine heart, what Christ saith, *Joh. 6. 55. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him:* If thou dost believingly receive at his Table; doubt not thy strength, seeing Christ dwelleth in thee; and what have ye to desire like an indwelling Christ? And that thou mayest desire; be sure to believe his Words, thou shalt dwell in him: how desireable is it to have him so near, and how encourageing against all manner of assaults, when we can say as *1 Joh. 4. 4. Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world.*

6ly, By sincere Communicating, ye may warrantably expect to be confirmed Christians, by the Seal of God for a blessed Eternity : and therefore the desire of the Soul should be to partake of this blessed Communion. For this Ordinance is designed for securing Believers of a Title to all the benefits of the new Covenant ; for which cause these pledges are given by Christ : have ye pondered the greatness of that mercy, to have a Charter for Heaven ratified with Gods own Seal ? And that thou shalt be preserved unto that heavenly Kingdom : Is not thy poor soul many times ready to faint, by reason of thy Doubts, that thou has no interest in Gods special Favour , that thou never received the mercies of his Chosen, that though thou hast received many mercies , yet thou knowest not but an Hypocrite may have all that sort of mercies conferred on thee ? Art thou not sometimes afraid that if death should now seize thee, thou may'st have no better than the Hypocrites portion ? Would not some solid perswasion of God's love be a great relief to thy poor soul, to know that Christ is come to dwell in thee, from whose love thou shalt never be separate ? Who shall make thee live, because he lives : Then consider what Christ the truth saith, *Joh. 6. 51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven, If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.* He well knoweth, that our eternity is our great concern, and therefore taketh pains to secure those who depend on him, that if they receive him, they shall have no cause of fear, he is so deeply concerned with the Believers certainty and comfort of his Eternal well-being, that in this 6. of *Joh.* He poureth out Arguments to secure it, *ver. 50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven.* That a man may eat thereof, and not die, and *ver. 51. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever,* and continueth to inculcat the certainty thereof, to *ver. 59,* Trust then what he saith ; that if thou eat of this Bread of Life at his Table, which the believing Partaker doth, then thou shalt not die, but live for ever : This should raise thy desires for this enriching Ordinance, that thy Doubting may be turned into rejoycing in God thy Saviour.

I might add here, that our desire for this holy Communion should be so sincere and strong, that Believers should endeavour frequent Communicating : But having occasion elsewhere to speak a little of frequency in partaking; I shal now only put you in mind : that some Celebrating this Sacrament much more frequently than others, should both be charitable one to another ; where neither precipitancy can be charged on the one side, nor sinful negligence on the other : There is no doubt, but many godly Ministers celebrate the Lords Supper very frequently by principles of Conscience, and Love to that Duty ; and should not be otherwise judged of by these who celebrate more seldom. And other godly Ministers cannot have this Ordinnance so frequently Celebrated; who by their principles judge it necessary, to examine most of the Communicants before Celebration, that they may the better know the state of their flocks , which requir-eth a considerable portion of time for its performance ; ther's no cause of stumbling on either hand, when it's known that in both ways there is a conscientious and affectionat regard to that great Ordinance of Christ : the Scripture mentioneth often, but not how often ; yet because it mentioneth often, and because of the love we should have to frequent Fellowship with Christ, in that way of his own appointment : frequency should be endeavoured ; and if people cannot frequently partake in the place of their residence, other opportunities should be improved, as God giveth occasion in his providence, which is now frequently offered, and embraced also by the most serious.

It may not be improper in this place, to enquire why some that profess a desire to partake of the Lords Supper nevertheless may be warrantably debarred.

*Ans.* I. The desire of partaking simply of it self cannot qualify a person for the Lords Supper, except this desire be qualified by a right principle, for a good end, and due preparation endeavoured ; otherwise a profane Russian, Apostate, or Atheist, might pretend a desire, and so be admitted ; if a professed desire were a sufficient qualification, and so that holy Ordinance profaned.

2ly, These who are appointed stewards of the mysteries of God are required to be faithful, 1 Cor. 4. 2. For they must give an account to their Master, and therefore cannot dispose of what is his, but by his own direction.

3ly, His express direction is, *Matth. 7. 6. Give not that which is holy unto dogs*: And therefore the Gospel privileges, wherewith they are entrusted, must be dispensed only to those who have a right to them: As none were to partake of the Pascheover, but such as were clean and sanctified, 2 Chron. 30: 17. *Jer. 15: 19. If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.*

4ly, Seing these holy mysteries are to be administered to those only who have a right to them, then the Stewards without presuming on Gods Prerogative to know the hearts of men, and who have a right in Gods sight; they are to dispense these Mysteries, according to ordinary Rules given them by their Master, and recorded in the holy Scriptures: wherein we find some actually deprived of the privileges of others, and cast out from the Communion of Believers, 1 Cor. 5. 4, and 5. ver. and verse 13. *Put away from among your selves that wicked person.*

5ly, When men are thus deprived of these Benefits according to the rules of Gods Word; Subjection and Obedience should be yielded unto those who are set over them in the Lord, *Heb. 13: 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account:*

6ly, When it's apparent, that some who pres to be at the Lords Table, have no knowledge of the Covenant of Grace, untowhich the Lords Supper is a Seal, nor any competent measure of the knowledge of Christ himself, nor how to discern the Lords Body, or *Secondly*, Are so obstinate, that they will subject to no trial, whereby Ministers may know to whom they Administer that holy Ordinance, such as will give no account of their soundness in the Faith, nor declare a consent to receive Christ as Redeemer and Lord, or *Thirdly*, Are of such ungodly conversation, that they testify themselves to be strangers to



to Christ, and the power of his grace: these persons while they continue such, could not but profane the Lords Supper, and therefore should consider that they deprive themselves of that benefit: For Ministers must not transgress the Laws of Christ to humour men, nor must they be partakers of other mens Sins, who would precipitate themselves into that heinous guilt of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

7ly, And these who are thus debarred, should not take this censure, as if they were totally rejected; but rather for their present good, to prevent the guilt of eating and drinking unworthily: and for the time to come should pray and endeavour to be qualified for partaking with others in that holy Ordinance.

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## CH A P. VIII.

*Believers should come to the Lords Supper  
with Faith and Expectation.*

### The seventh Inference.

**T**HIS holy Ordinance being the Communion of Christs Body and Blood; then Believers should approach it with Faith and Expectation of this blessed Communion.

And that the Believer is obliged to this Faith and Expectation, Consider,

First, That Believers must render unto Christ, the honour due to his faithfulness, since he maketh an offer of himself, saying, take eat; then we are to believe in our hearts he will be present making good his offer to the believing Receiver: otherwise we dishonour him, as if what he saith and offereth were not to be trusted: which would run us unto deep guilt, besides, that it would render the whole transaction on our part, Faithless. Void, and Unprofitable; this therefore should be carefully adverted, that there be no suspicion of the truth of Christs offer, or his faithfulness; lest we profane that holy Name, who will

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not suffer his faithfulness to fail, *Psal. 89. 33.* This his honour should be most dear to thee, who was so dear to him, as to make his soul an offering for thy sin, and now offereth himself to be thine; Come therefore believingly to the Lords Table, trusting him who is truth it self, *Joh. 14. 6.*

*Secondly,* The whole of this holy work must be managed by Faith; for we have no other way of seeing him, with whom we are to have Communion, but by Faith, though now we see him not, yet we believe, *1 Pet. 1: 8.* Faith is now our eye to behold him: ye go to the Lords supper in Faith of a Divine Institution, ye go to it, believing it's your duty by Christs Command, ye go to it, believing he was slain, and is alive, ye go to it, believing he hath provided a way for Interest in his Body and Blood, and are to go to it actually believing in him for your personal partaking of this Communion, so that Faith is required in all the parts of it, and grounds laid down for the Believers comfortable Expectation.

*3ly,* Come to it with Expectation, for herein thou art about thy Lord and Masters service, which he requireth: thou needest not fear it to be said, who hath required this at thine hand, for himself hath required it, and ther's still good to be expected in doing of his Will, *Rev. 22. 14.* Your labour shall not be in vain, for ye serve the Lord Christ, *Col. 3. 24.* Blessed are all his attendants whose care is to serve him, For Christ saith, *Where I am there shall also my servant be, Joh. 12. 26.* Thou mayest expect he will be with thee at his Table, who art his servant in sincerity.

*4ly,* Come in Faith, and Hope; for the promise is to him that believeth, *Gal. 3. 22.* Believing is the only sure way for this blessed Fellowship, and your seeing the glory of God in his power and mercy toward you; Consider your need of the Lords appearing for your good, and do not obstruct your mercy by mischief, remember what is said, *Mat. 13. 58.* *And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief:* If he shall say, according to thy Faith, so be it unto thee, and thou hast no Faith,  
then

then blame thy self if no mighty works be done for thee; for he will not humour thy misbelief; Labour then not only to have some actings of Faith, but being strong in it giving glory to God, devise liberally of thy God, seek that he will deal bountifully with thee, and remember what is said, *Mat. 15. 28. O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.*

5ly, If thou comest not to this Ordinance with Expectation; thou wilt be ready to think the matter is not great, whether thou partake or not. for thou expectest no great benefit by it, and so any trivial excuse will prevail to let it alone: for our natural corruption is so strong, and our grace commonly so weak, that pure Duty of it self doth not always engage us without some prospect of advantage, but when our own good appeareth in the work, then we have an argument from our own souls to resist obstructions standing in the way of this profit: and if thou should go forward, and partake; yet thy expectations being languide, thy seriousness will too readily be proportioned to thy hope, and languid also: but remember that proclaimed gracious Name, *Exod. 34. 6.* Is in a peculiar manner recorded in this Ordinance, and having recorded his Name, he will come and bless his people, *Exod. 20. 24.*

6ly, Endeavour to approach the Lords Table with expectation of good, that ye may be able to encourage others to the same Duty; many of you will have the occasion to see and speak with one another before ye partake, and out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth will be speaking, for which cause ye should observe where there is need of strengthening the hands of weak and doubting persons, and purposely let something fall which may be gathered by others for their encouragement: as in thy own Family, when thou art considering who of thy children or servants may be most ripened for that holy Ordinance, who had never yet the confidence to presume it; yet drop words of encouragement, by shewing the excellent things to be there obtained, the happiness of those who indeed receive Christ, the dignity and mercy of being solemnly engaged to Christ, the comfort of

having a Pledge of his love, the mercy of being admitted unto such near communion with him: thus a word may be blessed for engaging others in that Duty, which may be their blessing for ever. Whereas on the other hand, if thy mouth be filled with complaints, and others hear thee saying thou hast no great benefit by Communion, thou questions whether thou wilt go to the Lords Table or not, especially if thou be a person noted for Religion; these who hear such Discourse being weak, will be tempted to think, what a fool am I to take in any thoughts of communicating, when such an eminent Christian speaketh so meanly of it, as if little or no profit were to be had, I will give it over: and thus some poor tender smoking Flax, may be quenched by your means; and if compassionate Iesus be tender of them, (as no doubt he will) yet no thanks to you, who are guilty by casting water on their little coal, which could have quench't it, if a better friend had not kept it in life.

It may not be amiss to consider in this place, what may be the reasons that so few professing Christians go to the Lords Supper with this necessary believing expectation: seeing its dishonourable to our blessed Redeemer. obstructeth our own good, and is often found prejudicial to others.

*Ans* First, It will be found that the seeds of Atheism, and unbelief of Gods Word and Promise, hath a deep hand in this wo. Ah! few Christians by profession are established in the truth; men do not & will not lay this to heart, tho' they often hear it, and I fear are disgusted, because they so often hear it: proud Nature taking it heavily to be charged with unfixedness in the Faith; and these disrelishing such warnings most, who have most need of them. I wish the Reader concerned in this, retire to his own Conscience and put the question closely home: do I firmly believe the history of Christs Passion? And that Salvation is by no other Name? I speak not now of mens perswasion, that Christ hath loved them, and washed them in his own Blood; but mens perswasion that he was dead, and is alive. If ye will not try your unfixedness in fundamental Truths in season, you may soon come to know

know your misbelief by experience, to your grief in an hour of temptation, or at the hour of death: try therefore in time what ye believe, and on what grounds; seek to be fixed in the faith of Christ and his truth, otherways your expectations will still be faint. Nor do I speak here of such perswasion and fixedness in the truth, as is inconsistent with any degree of doubting: for here we know but in part, but that which I speak is against that dangerous unfixedness, that hath no degree of perswasion, under which too many are perishing.

Secondly. But some others are not so much discouraged by misbelief of this nature, as by their fears that Christ will have no regard to them, that he will never honour them with such communion with himself: others they grant may have it, but for themselves, they look for nothing but a dry Fleece, when others are wet, they have deserved no better, and expect no better.

*Ans.* If our mercies be dispensed according to deserving, then we may all stop together, and proceed no further. But blessed be God, that our expectations depend on free grace, I will freely love them: *Hos.* 14. 4. 2. Hath he not regarded thee already, in opening thine eyes to see thy wretchedness, which thou didst not see before? Doth he not discover Diseases in order to a remedy? If he had no regard to thee, he could have suffered thee to run on in presumption, and sit down at his Table, without ever minding a wedding Garment, and made thy rising thy terrour; but now he preventeth it, by making thee consider what thou art about. Therefore 3. If thou would be regarded at his Table and accepted, know, that a garment of Salvation will cover all thy spots: give praise that this Garment is ready for the putting on, give praise that it is not only provided for the putting it on, but himself putteth it on: *Isa.* 61 10. *He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation.* Give praise that ever any poor sinners were secured of these garments, and render praise that there is a minut of time left thee to beg these garments, that fine Linnen of the Saints, under which covering thou canst not be despised, nor thy holy Expectation disappointed.

Thirdly. Others faint in their expectations; because tho' they have been often at the Lords Table, yet they never get great profit. *Anj.* and whose fault was this? If thy misbelief deprived thee of the communications of grace, where wilt thou leave thy complaint? For he warned thee, that mighty works were not to be expected where unbelief had the dominion; thou mayest go to a hundred Communion and never be the better, if thou dost not believe nor draw out of the Wells of salvation: therefore if thou hast a sincere value for Communion with Christ, if thou would not always carry away a bad report of that enriching Ordinance, if thou wouldst prevent a contempt of it in thy own soul: consider seriously what hath been thy manner of communicating formerly; see thy way wherein thy particular defects have been; thy neglect of preparation, thy hypocrisy; thy lukewarmness in the whole of the work; and thy misbelief at the work: repent of these evils, that thou mayest not say thou had a hard Master, but an hard heart.

Fourthly. Others are discouraged in their expectations, because they observe not others who frequent Communion, much bettered in their conversations.

This I grant is for a lamentation, that so few appear like communion with Christ: yet it is not so with all, and tho' they were but few, as *Isa. 17. 6. a few berries in the utmost fruitful branches.* Its Gods great mercy, when some are preserved as Witnesses against a declining generation, who not only are made suitable to a publick solemn Communion; but such as rarely, any thing can be discovered in their practice, that is not consistent with present fellowship with God, tho' possibly ye discern it not, as being ignorant of walking with God yourselves. 2. If this be thy regrave, that that thou seest so few fruitful Christians after Communion, then labour to add one to the number of these few, lest others be discouraged by thy practice also. Thirdly. However it be as to partakers, tho many prove very unfruitful; yet this is never occasioned by want of provision, being allowed to eat and drind abundantly,

ly, and the hungry are filled with good things; and many have found their souls made as a watered Garden in attending this holy Ordinance. O that we were stirring up our selves, and stirring up one another, to pray down such showers of Blessings, as hath been found at Communion in the days of old.

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## CHAP. IX.

### *Objections of doubting Christians answered.*

#### The eighth Inference.

**T**he eighth Inference from the words, is, That seeing so great a benefit as the Communion of Christs Body and Blood, may be had in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper: then Christians are obliged to endeavour the removal of all Objections, and stumbling Blocks, that stand in the way to obstruct their partaking of this Benefit.

Before the particular Objections be mentioned, I shall premit these few things.

*First.* That all professed Christians should make conscience, not to pretend Scruples and Objections where there is none; for where the Conscience is not really burdened with some difficulty, its but hypocrisie to frame Objections against peoples partaking of the Lords Supper, that they may appear more serious than others: the heart of man is so desperately wicked and deceitful, that some have need of this Caution.

*2dly.* Yet on the other hand, when some are exhorted to prepare for the Lords Supper, especially young people who did never partake before: if fears and doubts arise in their hearts, whereby they stand in need of counsel and help of the more experienced; they should not deprive themselves of that help, fearing they may be thought Hypocrites, or get a name of more seriousness than they deserve: as some have kept up their doubts from all others, until their doubts were too

too strong for them, and brought them under such distress, that it had been much their advantage to have revealed them sooner.

3dly. Where stumbling Blocks are such as may be removed with a little pains, or some more humility; all should make conscience of getting them removed: As fore Instance, if there be variance betwixt persons, where a little true humility would cure all, in confessing of wrongs and injuries done to others, or forgiving injuries: then men should go to the utmost against their own pride, and submit to one another, rather than to deprive themselves of so blessed a communion with Christ. Eph. 5. 21. *Submitting your selves one to another, in the fear of God*

4thly. Where Objections are really serious and of weight, yet Christians should take care not to indulge them by heaping up of Scruples, and in the mean time, shutting their ears against any solution or mean of clearing their Doubt; they should not conclude, that such Objections cannot be answered, and so determine to follow their own Opinion, before means be used. As for Instance, some because they find such a particular evil in themselves, or because they have no persuasion that Christ will countenance them in that Ordinance; do inconsiderately conclude they will not partake: but such should use all means within their reach, to know if these or the like Objections, be sufficient arguments to keep them from the duty of communicating.

5thly. When some are observed to withdraw from the Lords Table, if they be of sober and Christian Conversation; its uncharitable to judge them Hypocrites on that account, and to load them with Reproaches, as if they were all distempered, if they be not Hypocrites; for ye are discharged to judge. Mat. 7. 1. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

6thly. Such as are of that Opinion, that all professing Christians should without debate be Communicants, should consider, that all Communicants are required to examine themselves, and accordingly act: and the Examination required, is in order to partaking, that he  
who



who examineth, may find clearness in his Conscience to partake : and without this, no man should approach the Lords Table ; that is, no man should partake, who in the mean time doubteth, whether he should partake or not, *for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.* Rom. 14. 23. I grant a Christian may partake, tho' he hath many other doubts ; but he cannot safely partake while this doubt remaineth : therefore all means should be used, to have his conscience convinced, that its his duty to partake : It cannot be sufficient for a Christian, to say I am not clear to communicat, and so continue neglecting that Ordinance, if he make not conscience of getting stumbling Blocks in his way removed ; the man is guilty of his own bondage, who doth not what he justly may, to get his Fetters off.

And for your help I shall consider, and by the Lords help answer some of these Objections, which I have most insisted on and urged. As,

*First.* Some object, I am not a Believer, and therefore should not go to the Lords Table.

*Ans.* Some object this indeliberately ; is it easie to think thy self no Believer ? Dost thou consider what will be the eternal lot of Ubelievers ? sure this comfortless Conclusion should have very evident reasons. But its to be lamented, that some will very lightly object their not believing, when it may serve a turn, and keep them from a Duty they have no mind to, and yet little exercised, or grieved for the matter. You are easily satisfied not to go to the Lords Table, but will not take pains conscientiously to examine your faith, putting it to the tryal of Gods word ; but thou thinkest thou art no Believer, and there's an end, and thus thou mayest sinfully neglect that Ordinance while thou livest.

*2dly.* Before thou dost impartially examine thy self, thou art not sure but the grace of Faith is given thee ; and if it be given, thou art most ungrate to deny it : for a conscientious Christian doubting of his Faith, dare not therefore peremptorily say he hath no Faith, lest he be injurious to the free Grace of God, not knowing but after serious examination, he may be enabled to say

say, *I know in whom I have believed.* 2 Tim. 1. 12. He finds it very uneasy, to charge himself with a graceless state, except the grounds were undenyable; therefore search well, before you fix so comfortless a Conclusion.

3dly. Weak Faith should not be lookt on as no Faith; for Faith admitteth of degrees, some are of little Faith. Mat. 6. 30. *O ye of little faith.* Some are of great Faith. Mat. 15. 28. *Woman, great is thy faith.* And if you be of the very meanest, who have obtained like precious Faith, acknowledge it to the glory of the Giver: see that your Faith be of that kind, which uniteth Christ and the sinner. Eph. 3. 17. *Thi' ye cannot say that ye are strong in faith, yet if you have received Christ, ye have a right to the childrens food.* Gal. 3. 26. *By faith we are the children of God.*

4thly. See that you mistake not the nature of saving Faith, as if it were only a perswasion that you shall be saved; which is to follow after believing: if you cannot deny, but the desire of your soul is toward him; then you have ground of comfort: for the people of God have comforted themselves with this desire. Isa. 26. 8. 9. *The desire of our soul is to thy Name, with my soul have I desired thee.* If God hath wrought this in you, do not deny the thing you find: What pleasure have ye to deny God his due glory, and keep your souls in perplexity? Ye see the Children of God, have searched out their very desires, and avowed them thankfully before the searcher of hearts, which is also your duty; and if you cannot deny some real willingness to have Christ as he offereth himself, then a day of gracious power hath come to thy soul, for nothing could make thy heart willing but divine power, Psal. 110. 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* God hath bestowed more on thee than only light, this is the Light of life, therefore search it carefully if thy soul be made willing, and if thereby thou hast been opening thy heart for Christ: for where the heart is opened by willingness, Christ hath certainly performed his word, Rev. 3. 20. *He cometh in and suppeth with such.* There is no willing opened heart for Christ, but he is in that heart: therefore

fore I would say, despise not the day of small things, but that I dare not call any real desire or willingness for Christ small things; they are so enriching to every soul that hath them: the willing heart gets the *water of life*. Rev. 22. 17. and therefore a willing heart is a believing heart. Try also if thou findest thy soul leaning on Christ; that notwithstanding of all thy fears and doubts, yet thou still hangest upon him, thou canst not be rent from him, its as death to think on separation from him: if thou thus depend and lean upon him, then he is the beloved of thy soul. Cant. 8. 5. *The spouse leaneth on her beloved*. Tho' thy condition be as a Wilderness, because of griefs and fears; yet thou choosest him for thy alone. Stay, thou seekest rest to thy poor soul in none other but in him: then according to Psal. 2. 12. *Blessed are all that stay on him, or trust in him*. Thou comest to him for rest, neither able to bear thy self, nor thy burden; he will be as good as his word, Mat. 11. 28. *I will give you rest*. And thy coming, is thy Faith. Joh. 6. 37.

*Object*. I cannot come to the Lords Table, for I have no hope to be accepted of him, how can I expect to meet with Christ there, who for any thing I know, did never meet with him? How can I think to be accepted at his Table, for I do not find that ever he accepted of me?

*Ans*. This Objection is of weight, but savoury. For 1<sup>st</sup>, it relisheth a discerning of the true intent of that Ordinance, which is a blessed meeting with Christ. 2<sup>dly</sup>. Some remarking of Christs absence. 3<sup>dly</sup>. Some desire for that Meeting and Communion. And 4<sup>thly</sup>. A remaining grief in the soul for his withdrawing, and fear that they are not accepted: but to your Objection more particularly.

First, Take care you be not mistaken as to your acceptance, for by reason of our weakness, its not easily discerned; you may be accepted of God, and not comforted, and you may be comforted, and not accepted; Christ may be near, and doing you good to a high degree, and yet your self not knowing he was near you,  
Gen.

Gen. 28. 16. *Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not*: and on the other hand, you may have delight in approaching to God, that is in the externals of duty, and yet be but proud hypocrites: as *Isa. 58. 2.* Therefore take heed how ye judge of acceptance, for too many, and these not of the very worst, advance their comfort in prayer as a rule, thereby to judge of their acceptance with God, if they have freedom to speak, and some joy attending their speaking, though they know not whence that joy ariseth: for all may be meer nature or common gifts, for any thing they know, yet thereby conclude, God hath surely accepted of them, because at such a time, they had a great measure of joy and delight; but this Conclusion is not safe, except they can instruct and make it out, that it is the joy of the Lord, spiritual strengthenin joy.

Secondly, Consider that you may be accepted of God, and answered in such things as are most necessary for you; tho' you be not answered in the manner ye would, if thy answer should be as *Pauls*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. *My grace is sufficient for thee*, thou art mercifully accepted, and answered; tho' the Thorn in the flesh be not presently pluckt out, ye may smart yet longer by its pain, and the grace sustaining you is your answer and proof of your Acceptance.

Thirdly, Your persons may be accepted, when some of your requests are not accepted: a *Moses* accepted into extraordinary nearness and intimacy with God, yet some of his requests are not accepted, so as to be granted, Deut. 3. 25. *I pray thee let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan*; but vers. 26. *let it suffice thee, speak no more of this matter*. Many Christians are too ready to conclude, that God hath no regard to them; because he granteth not what their hearts is set upon, whereas he is about to give them better things: *Canaan* was a pleasant land, but a meer trifle to that heavenly *Canaan* bestowed on *Moses*.

Fourthly, And supposing your requests were spiritual and necessary, for your souls good; yet ye are to wait for his answer: yea, tho' it tarry, wait for it: *Hab. 2. 1. I will*

will watch to see what he will say: thou thinkest there's no delay, thou art in a horrible Pit, yet remember Ps. 40. 1. *2. He brought me out of a horrible pit:* after he had patiently waited for him, a Song of Deliverance will at length clear all, that your selves were accepted, and your necessary Petition recorded.

Fifthly, Yea its safer for you to question the truth of your coming unto God, and the sincerity of your prayers; than the truth of his accepting such as come unto him, He having said he will in no ways cast out, *Joh. 6. 37.* Its too common, tho' a dangerous evil, to charge God with our own faults, and to complain of him for refusing, when we either ask not, or ask amiss: who dare say that they seek and search for God with their whole heart? But he is found of them. *Jer. 29. 12.* Who are put away that bring their hearts unto God? *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? Gen. 4. 7.* Yet proud Nature, will still blame God rather than it self.

Sixthly, Consider well on what account ye can be accepted of God, that its only in the beloved Christ, *Eph. 1. 6.* Proud Nature hurteth us here also, prompting us to think, we may be accepted for our own sincerity, or fervency; &c. And so, acceptance with God is not sought in Christs Name; and if not sought in his Name, by what warrant can we expect it? *Joh. 14. 14.* *If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it:* its not sufficient that mens judgements are satisfied it should be so; for many are not ignorant of this, who yet do not perform it; therefore as ye desire acceptance with God at any time, and especially at the Lords Table, labour, 1<sup>st</sup>. To be found in Christ. 2<sup>dly</sup>. Let all your Prayers be actually, and as distinctly in his Name as ye can reach. 3<sup>dly</sup>. Observe well what answer ye get, especially when your souls are bettered and strengthened in holiness after prayer, that ye may no more complain that ye have no acceptance with God, but enabled to say, as Psal. 66. 19 *But verily God hath heard me, he hath attended to the voice of my prayer; and then bless him as in the next Vers. That he hath neither turned away thy prayer, nor his*

grace from thee. 4thly. And finding that the Lord hath mercifully accepted of you, and your prayers, other-ways than ye thought, then be encouraged in the Lord, and say, as Psal. 116. 1. *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications:* and Vers. 13. *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.* And therefore 5thly. When thou art at his Table, set thy soul for accepting of Christ, and be not jealous of his Offer, for thou shalt have a blessed Meeting. I may say of this Ordinance, as is expressed by the Prophet, pointing at Gospel Ordinances in the latter days, Ezek. 20. 40. *This is the mountain of the height of Israel, and there will I accept thee:* here is a Mercy-seat indeed, Christ revealed, as dying to obtain mercy for poor sinners, and on this Mercy-seat he meeteth with his people. *Exod. 25. 22.*

*Object.* I cannot go to the Lords Table, for I know that I shall not live suitable to Engagements made there, I find it already to my grief, that all my former Vows are broken; I will break no more engagements of that nature, better keep my self free of that addition to my former sins, and pray that the Lord would pardon me for my unfaithfulness in times past.

*Ans.* Its to be supposed in charity, that you do not design to be unfaithful, if ye should communicat again, for ye appear to grieve for it; but for you to prophesie that it will be so hereafter, is a limiting of the power and mercy of God? What do you know what is to come? For you may have that at one Communion, which you never obtained before. *Is the spirit of the Lord straitned, that ye cannot be made faithful? Micah. 2. 7.*

2dly. It appears to have been your custom, to trust your selves with the keeping of your Vows, for ye dare not trust God with it; you think it dangerous to put your selves so far in his reverence, as that either you must trust him, or be treacherous, and therefore you will not expose your selves to that necessity of his help: Ah poor soul! wilt thou not be beholden to God for holding up thy goings? Psal. 17. 5. *Hold up my goings.* Wilt thou not be beholden to him, for causing thee walk in his ways, and making thee faithful? Ezek. 39

27. Cannot his mercy and grace preserve the, when thy foot is ready to slip? *Psal. 94. 18. When I said, my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.*

3dly If thou be a Christian indeed, and concerned in Christ, then thou art commanded to do this in remembrance of him. Now what sort of a Christian art thou, who dare say to him in his face, Lord, thou sayest do this? Bst I say, I will not do this; for thy Objection runs so, I resolve I will not communicat more; and givest thy reason, because I will not come under such Engagements as I am ready to break; and because thou canst never communicat but thou wilt come under such Engagements, its all one, as if thou had said, I will never communicat. Christ saith, *his yoke is easie*, Mat. 11. 30. Thou sayest it is so uneasie, I will never put my neck more under it. Canst thou hold up thy face and tell him so? Remember who said *Psal. 2. 3. Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.* Here is the Mystery; pretend what ye will, that the Bonds of Duty are troublesome, and therefore these Cords must be cast away, and then we shall have some more liberty to do as we list: and thus thou makest a snare for thy own poor soul, thou lookest on thy Duty as a snare to thee, but now thou art caught in a snare of thy own making, to sin with ease.

4thly. Thou appears to think it unlawful to come under such a Bond, as if we should not make such Engagements; How then sayest thou to that? *Psal. 76. 11. Vow unto the Lord your God and pay; there the Lord maketh it a Duty, which thou refusest as evil.* *Psal. 119. 106. I have sworn and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgements.* It was never the way of Godly men, to say I will engage no more to God, but their way hath been, to resolve on paying of their Vows to God. *Psal. 61. 8. That I may dayly perform my vows.* And *Psal. 56. 12. Thy vows are upon me O God, I will render praises unto thee.* And therefore,

5thly. Thy best way is to lament and mourn for thy unfaithfulness, and yet resolve upon paying of thy Vows, blessing God that there is yet a Season for repentance.

ance: and if thou repents indeed, there will be a care for the time to come, that no Duty be neglected; thou wilt be afraid to neglect communicating, but labour to prepare for it; because Christ hath made it a Duty, thou wilt not think that any sinful omission can cure thy former evils.

6thly. Whereas thou sayest, that thou wilt seek for the remission of thy former failings which thou hopest to obtain, tho' thou never goto the Lords Table. I answer, if thou obtainest pardon, it must be by the Blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. 1 Joh. 1. 7. *The blood of Jesus Christ his son, cleanseth us from all sin.* Now in the Lords Supper, there is an offer of the benefit of this precious Blood: and if thou deliberately refusest the application of Christs Blood, in the way that he hath appointed, its just that thou should never get that precious Blood applyed in thy way, since thou knowingly refusest his way: for albeit the pardon of sin doth not absolutely depend on participation of that holy Ordinance, but that he who believeth, eateth Christs flesh and drinketh his blood, *Joh. 6. 54.* And a Godly person may be in such Circumstances, as he cannot have the benefit of the Lords Supper; yet the contempt of Christs Institution where this Ordinance is administered, is a sin of an high nature; as if Christ had instituted it in vain: and therefore I say its just with God, to deprive thee of pardon in thy way, while thou despisest his way.

7thly. No Christian who observeth his own way, but will find cause of mourning, for being unsuitable to such holy Priviledges and Engagements: will it therefore follow, that no Christian who hath failed in his Duty, shall again partake? Then the best of men might resolve on no more communicating, and Christ shall not have the publick honour due to him by it. But if you say, your unfaithfulness hath been very grievous and extraordinary? still answer, you have the more need of the vertue of Christs Blood for remission, which should be applyed in that special manner he hath required; and therefore thy Duty is to repent, and prepare to



to shew forth the glory of Christs love manifested in that holy Ordinance; and the greater thy transgressions be, the greater is thy debt to shew forth his Death: by which Death, only thou can be preserved from that second Death which thou hast deserved.

*Object.* I cannot go to the Lords Table for he hath forsaken me, he hath cast off my soul, he sendeth nothing for my good, and nothing doth me good, he hath left me to my own counsels; why then should I profane so holy an Ordinance?

*Ans.* 1<sup>st</sup>. Its your mercy, if you can discern where the Lord either cometh unto, or deserteth your souls; for such as are utter strangers to God, know not the one by the other: if you had got no merciful visits, how had ye known these departings?

2<sup>dly</sup>. You may think your selves forsaken, because ye have not the comforts of Gods countenance which sometimes ye had, and yet not be forsaken as to the influences of his grace. Jer. 20. 9. *Then I said I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his Name. Yet vers. 11. But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible One; my persecutors shall stumble.*

3<sup>dly</sup>. You may utterly mistake, and think you are forgotten, when God says the contrare. Isa. 49. 14. *But Zion said the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. But vers. 15. Can a woman forget her sucking child, &c. And vers. 16. I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.*

4<sup>thly</sup>. If ever you had the favour of the chosen of God, if ever ye had testimonies of his love: then whom he loveth, he loveth to the end, Joh. 13. 1. *and will never utterly forsake*: but labour to have this sure, that ye have enjoyed the sanctifying mercies of the chosen of God. Psal. 106 4. *Pray for such mercies as these, lest it be as you fear.*

5<sup>thly</sup>. If you be left as to influences of grace, it is a bitter forsaking; yet some have been left as to degrees of grace, who were not totally forsaken, nor altogether deprived of grace, as Solomon 1 Kin. 11. 9.

6<sup>thly</sup>. The Lord may thus forsake, both as to comforts

forts and many degrees of grace, and yet return again: *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.* Isa. 54. 7. And Micah 7. 19. *He will return again, he will have compassion on us.*

7thly. It should be considered also, that we are often forsaking our God in a great measure, and then say he hath forsaken us: its our wretched way first to fall back from him who is our life, and then what good we had begins to wither; which being discerned, in stead of blaming our selves for declining, we first begin and challenge God for forsaking of us, as if he were the author of all the hurt, and not we: O! how much doth he bear at our hands? *Our way is to cast off the thing that is good.* Hos. 2. 3. and then we cry out, *Why hath he cast us off?*

8thly. If the Lord should forsake us, yet we must not forsake him: he hath no need of us, but we have need of him: we cannot want him, but he may well want us: it doth not become us proudly to debate with our God, whether he or we shall first draw to other again, but it becomes us humbly to look up and wait for God, when he hideth his face. Isa. 8. 17.

9thly. And its to be observed, that the Lord approveth most of these who pursue his mercy most closely, when he appeareth displeased, as having no regard to them: as is evident in the woman of Canaan, Mat. 15. 25. &c.

10thly. Be sparing in thy complaints of God, and rather leave thy complaint upon thy self. Job. 10. 1. *I will leave my complaint upon my self.* Remember he gave thee warning of old, 2 Chr. 15. 2. *If ye forsake him, he will forsake you.* Lay to heart how thou hast procured this unto thy self, Jer. 2. 17. *Hast thou not procured this unto thy self, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way?* Remember how often thou hast turned the back on him, when he was doing thee good; acknowledge this thy sin, and that thou hast fallen by thine own iniquity, and return unto the Lord thy God, as Hos. 14. 1. And if thou wilt take his counsel, hearken yet to what he saith, Mal. 3. 7. *Return unto me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts.* Bless God that

that there is yet any hope of a meeting again in mercy, *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you,* Jam. 4. 8. *Yea tho' thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me saith the Lord.* Jer. 3. 1. What wouldest thou have the Lord to say more? But sayest thou I need one word more yet; for I have lost all spiritual strength, I know its my duty to return to him, and praise him while I live, for this condescension ever to invite me any more, that there is any door of hope left open: but I cannot return to him, if I should never meet with him in favour; what then wilt thou do, wilt thou leave it so? Art thou resolved to forsake, and be forsaken? Ah poor sinner! who will be the loser? Better for thee yet to hearken what he will say further to thee: remark then what is said Prov. 1. 23. *Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my spirit unto you; set to your duty, endeavour to turn to him, and you shall have the help of his Spirit: defer not then, but while he calleth entertain his kind offer, and give it such an answer, as Jer. 3. 22. Return ye back-sliding children, and I will heal your back-slidings: behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God: this will make a comfortable meeting again, so that thou shalt not need to stay from his Table, As one forsaken of thy God, thou shalt be as tho' thou had not been cast off,* Zech. 10. 6. *He can soon make thy latter end better than thy beginnings.* Ezek. 36. 11.

*Object.* I doubt if I should believe, for I think my self one of these who would not be the better, fearing still I am none of Gods Elect.

*Ans.* If such Objections were not framed to my hand, I should neither form nor publish them: but being often proposed, and particularly this fear of not being elected, and some souls distressed thereby, cannot pass it altogether but for answer.

*First,* You may as well say I doubt whether I should be saved or not, as to say ye doubt whether ye should believe or not; since he that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him: can you deliberately think ye should not desire to be saved? This needs no refutation, I hope ye will be ashamed of it. 2dly,

2dly. Consider you are under a command to believe, and to reject it designedly, is rebellion against God, besides your own ruine: and what success you can dream of in a course of rebellion against a merciful God, I understand not.

3dly. No revelation from God allows you to defer believing until you know you are elected; you must have this from some new unhallowed Bible, but neither from Old or New Testament.

4thly. The way to know of your Election, is first to believe: and if you have grace to believe, you are elected; and if ye be elected, ye will believe: for Act. 13. 48 *And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed*

5thly. By what revelation do ye know that ye are not elected, answer this if you can? For tho' ye had lived a godless life to this hour, that will not prove it, for God effectually calleth the elect at what time he pleaseth, some in their younger, and some in their elder age: What presumption is this in you, to judge so presumptuously of the Decrees of God? For your great concern in Election, is to judge by its fruits, that ye are elected; and thus ye are directed to make your Calling and Election sure by the Graces of Gods Spirit, which are the fruits of Election, 2 Pet. 1. from the 5th vers. to the 11th of that Chapter. But to make it your first question whether ye are elected or not, before ye believe, is a way of your own devising, having nothing from God to warrant it.

6thly. Whatsoever tempteth you to disobey the Command of God, is from a Principle of darkness; but this tempteth you to disobey the Command of God, and therefore its from a Principle of darkness: and whatsoever hath a direct tendency to separat you from Christ by not believing, you should take as proceeding from the same Principle, and so without further dispute to reject it.

7thly. Tho' Satan be so cruel to thy poor soul by his temptations; yet be not thou so cruel to thy self, as to hearken to him: but put it home to thy own Conscience,

science, am not I a sinner deserving the wrath of God, what course should I take? Or whether can I go but to him who hath the words of eternal life, who directeth me to believe, and promiseth I shall be saved. *Joh. 3. 16.* What should more, to raise my indignation against all suggestions or temptations that oppose thy believing?

*Object.* Some say they cannot go to the Lords Table, because of fearful suggestions and horrid temptations that go near to blasphemy, which they cannot get out of their thoughts, and are ashamed to utter them to their dearest friends or relations: whereby they think themselves unworthy the name of Christians, or the society of men.

*Ans.* I shall premit a few considerations before any particular answers be given; for the case of such distressed souls is sometimes the most distressing part of a Ministers wholework, how to minister a word in season, for their relief and comfort. For,

1<sup>st</sup>. They often conceal the worst of the temptations which are most horrid, and are so disturbed with them, that they can hardly consider any thing that is spoken: they will appear to hearken to what a man speaketh, but in the mean time are busied in talking with their temptations; their adversary labouring to keep them so close at his work, that they shall hearken to nothing else, that being his interest and their hurt.

2<sup>dly</sup>. In some of these tempted persons, their appeareth no exercise of godliness, nothing but these dreadful temptations sometimes vexing them: for great levity is found in their conversation, otherwise as being unconcerned for salvation; yet are they often frightened with temptations tending to blasphemy. Others again who for many years have given good testimony of serious piety, yet are afflicted with temptations no less horrid and hateful; so that this tryal of being assaulted with such suggestions and temptations, cannot of it self prove either a gracious or graceless state; and therefore cannot be spoken unto, as if they were all godly, which makes the difficulty the greater: for tho' tenderness be due to them, yet must not be flattered,

flattered, as if these troubles of mind were proofs of true godliness: nor on the other hand, should the fearers of God be discouraged, as if such suggestions could make evidence that they are cast off of God.

3dly. Tho' there be great variety of these hellish temptations, which cannot all be named, nor expedient to mention; yet commonly the sum and scope of them, is to represent God as without mercy, and the Author of all their woes, that so God may be hated, and the poor tempted souls expect no good from him: this being Satan's great design.

4thly. Their temptations are sometimes so violent, that their understanding is in present danger, or their lives, or sometimes both; which increaseth the difficulty how to be serviceable to them in season, besides, that many of these tempted people, are found so fixed in their melancholly apprehensions, that whatever opinion they once conceive, either concerning their own temptations, or souls state, they are therein so tenacious: that except the very power of God accompany what is spoken, neither Arguments nor Exhortations will move them: I say, except the power of God appear, for sometimes his power hath appeared in blessing seasonable words for a relief unto them, which themselves have acknowledged; as for the Physicians part, and wherein they may be useful for correcting the excess of melancholly, I leave to themselves; but doubtless the Bonds of humanity, and much more Christian sympathy, obligeth so far as we are capable, to endeavour their good: and therefore tho' I be very unfit for such difficult work, yet having frequently occasion to speak with such persons, I shall humbly offer a few things to consideration as God helpeth.

First, Great compassion is due to such tempted souls, by praying for them, and with them as God giveth opportunity; and not amiss to let them know our sympathy, that they may be the more encouraged to a free discovery of the very worst: it will not be found safest, only to chide them for having such thoughts, or to say you are

are very sinful for having them, because the distressed person will reply; such suggestions are my burden and misery, I cannot keep them out of my mind, and that you call me sinful for having them, you are of my mind: for I do not think there is such a monstrous sinner in the World as I whose soul is a receptacle for such suggestions: for fear of sin in having such thoughts is the poor mans anguish already; and thus he findeth you adding to his grief.

2ly, After they have fully discovered their Temptations, or so much as they will reveal: sometimes by the blessing of God it's found very useful to let them know, that others have been as deeply tempted as they and to as great evils as they, who now by the mercie of God are delivered; for it's a great ease to them if they can be perswaded that any others have been in the like case, and are at last cured: & when they do not much regard other things that are spoken, yet they will readily hearken to this; and sometimes urge to know it's certaintie with great importunitie: at which time it were not a misse to gratifie them with some particular instances of such persons now delivered from their bondage: and albeit they commonly think that no sorrow is like to theirs, and that there are some evils in their hearts, that was never in the heart of any other; yet I have seen such instances blessed for allaying the extremity of ferour.

3ly, It were necessary also to know the rise and first beginnings of their disquiet, if natural, or accidental melancholy and grief, hath first opened a door to their troubles, as also if their understanding or bodies begin to suffer; that means may be the more dexterously and seasonably managed for their good, both as to soul and body.

4thly, It hath been observed to be sometimes useful, to improve for their encouragement, any word that droppeth from them favouring of respect to God, and fear of sin, for some of them do inadvertently let fall most savory expressions, and where these 3 things are found,  
1. Speaking honourably of God. 2. Bitterly against  
their

their own Sin, and 3ly, Prayer continued, there is good ground to hope for a merciful Issue, *Lam. 3: 25. He is good to the soul that seeketh him.*

5ly, It's necessary also prudently to conceal what Temptations they discover, for if they find them published, they will be ready to impart no more; and withal if their most frightening Temptations be published, the very shame of them may heighten their anguish, and tempt to worse.

6ly, It's expedient also, their friends take care, that they be not troubled with such company, as may increase their affliction, such as are not prudent, but may be ready to quarrel them for some of their expressions, or possibly mock them, which will be to their grief: as also from such company as are in like case with themselves, and not yet healed of their wounds: but these who have been in such trouble, and are now at liberty from their former bondage, are most meet for converse with them, to declare what God hath done for their souls, *Psal: 66: 16.*

7ly, Great prudence and caution is necessary to any friend of theirs, who would perswade them to go to the Lords Table while under the violence of these Temptations: for to urge them without some composure of mind, and freedom in their own consciences, may have bad effects: the safest way is to use arguments for convincing them of their Duty, and if this cannot be obtained, better forbear until God make light to arise, and they be more fitted for it: I have known some who being pressed by their friends, have been perswaded to go to the Lords Table, but being there did not open their mouth either to eat or drink, which afterward raised their trouble to a great height, and are at this day under deep distress on that account: it appears then to conduce more for the good of such souls, to suffer them to wait for a more serene hour by the arising of the Sun of Righteousness, whereby the dark clouds surrounding them, shall be dispelled, and then in his light they shall see light, *Psal. 36. 9.*

And for such as are tempted, all of you are not in a like



like danger ; and faithfulness requires to be plain with such of you as have never been concerned for your salvation, that your danger is great every way until ye flee to Christ as your refuge: and though ye hear that godly persons has been assaulted with horrid Temptations, yet that is no ground for you to think your selves godly, because ye have such Temptations, for ye may have their Temptations, but want such grace to resist them ; if ye embrace not Christ and Salvation through him, ye expose your selves as a prey to any Temptation ; having no interest in him who came to destroy the works of the Devil : Therefore cry to God to make you serious for Salvation, to make you sincere Believers, and convert you to himself by his spirit of grace ; and the more ye are tempted, be the more diligent, make the greater haste, that ye may be found in Christ, by whom ye shal be overcomers: and who knoweth, but meat may come out of the eater, and he who goeth about as a roaring lion seeking to devour, be disappointed of his design, and thy affliction under these very temptations be made by the over-ruling power of God, a mean to make thee flee to Christ for Salvation to thy soul, and deliverance from all thine Enemies, and if you will fix on this way for your relief, and all of you who have done so before ye came under these fiery trials, Consider,

*First*, That blessed Jesus Christ was tempted himself, and tempted to the greatest sins, even to worship the Devil, God's great enemy, *Matth. 4: 9.* And to destroy himself by being guilty of his own Death, *ver. 6.* By casting himself down from the *Pinacle* of the Temple All this and more he subjected unto, and being carried by Satan from one place to another, that thou a poor weak tempted Believer might be perswaded, he knoweth the greatest and worst of thy Temptations, *2ly*, That he will have Sympathy with thee as being tempted himself, *Heb. 2: 18.* *3ly*, That he hath sanctified this trial to Believers, by subjecting to it himself ; for though the wicked Temptations be not sanctified, yet thy lot under them is thereby sanctified. *4ly*, That he overcoming

them all, thou in him as thy head, shalt also overcome : Therefore adhere still to him, and thou cannot sink, *Rev. 12: 11.* He who accuseth day and night is overcome *by the blood of the lamb.*

217, Consider, That there are some Temptations that are the Devils sins, rather than ours, not arising from our selves, nor entertained by us, are but the fiery Darts of Satan cast in by violence : if Satan should now appear or any other way should tempt a godly man, to renounce God and worship him, this godly man at the very first rejecting such Temptation with Indignation and hatred, is not guilty by that Temptation, albeit the nature of the Temptation be most horrid and blasphemous ; and albeit the same godly man have sin remaining in him , yet that temptation is not his sin ; because it neither had it's Original in his heart, nor in any measure entertained by him : therefore do not so far yield to the Adversary, as to take with all his Temptations, as if they were your sins, for that's no smal part of his design, thereby to terrify you, as if ye were the most monstrous sinners in the World : the Apostle *Rom. 7. 17.* Finding a gracious principle in his soul against Sin, and Sin making war against the law of his mind, he can say of this Enemy that warreth against him, this Enemy is not himself, it's no more I but sin that dwelleth in me : the tempted Believer may well say, it's not I, but Satan who tempteth me ; and so much the more, because these Temptations had never that place in his heart that his Sins have : albeit it be afflicting to a child of God, that Satan should come so near, yet he is in all this but at War, not gaining nor yielded unto.

317, Therefore be sure of your resisting these Temptations from first to last, for voluntary entertaining such Suggestions would soon weaken your confidence, and strengthen your adversary ; therefore let all your thoughts be resisting thoughts, and then the Temptation, and thou art still Antagonists opposite one to another, when thou art resisting, thou art still in Gods way for a victory, *Jam. 4. 7.* Resist the Devil and he will flee from you. And whatever ye do, be careful to keep on Gods ground, keep by your

your post where God hath placed you, yielding nothing, and having done all, to stand. Eph. 6. 13.

• 4ly, Consider also, That we are not alone in this conflict, Eph. 6. 12. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.* And though all Believers have not a like violent Temptations, yet all of them have Satans Temptations to wrestle against, nor do ye know the Temptations of many others, though your own smarts you most.

5ly, Whatever be your Temptations, know that God hath not left you destitute of Armour against them, Eph. 6. 11. *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.* The very believing of this in thy heart, that God hath provided armour to preserve his people from danger, will be an encouragement to thee; but if thou think there is no relief, then thou faintest, and thereby thy Adversary hath advantage, a fainting man is soon overcome, but if thou think in thy heart there is relief at hand, then thou waxest valient in fight: and if the hope of this Armour be so strengthening what will the putting of it on be; take counsel then who hath provided it, and put it on, for it was provided for such as thee; and remark well what is said, ver. 16. *Above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* Christ's Armour will be proof, though the Darts be dipt in Hell, they shall not consume thee, though thy trial be like a fiery Furnace, yet set thy self to follow the footsteps of the Flock, who by Faith, *Quenched the violence of fire,* Heb. 11. 34. And when thou art at the lowest, labour still to retain the impressions of God's omnipotence, think nothing too hard for him, do not so dishonour him, as to think thy case incurable, Jer. 32. 17. *Is there any thing too hard for me.*

6ly, Give thy self frequently to Prayer, and complain of the violence done to thy poor soul by thine Adversary, hearken to no suggestion against Prayer, for thy God commandeth thee to call on him in the day of trouble, and he will deliver, Psal. 50. 15. Thou wilt be tempted to

think it's in vain to Pray: but believe not the father of lies, God hath not required to seek him in vain, *Isa.* 45. 19. He will tempt thee to think thou art not the better of Prayers, thou art not heard; but what if thou should be for a short season, that thou couldest observe no answer of Prayer, remember that better than you, have complained of the same, *Psal.* 22. 2. *O my God-I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent, but was it always so?* No, Mark what is said in the same *Psal.* ver. 24. and 25. *For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him, but when he cried unto him he heard.* And then follows a song of praise in the next ver. I know of some at this day under deep desertion, and assaulted with some of the worst of Temptations, but their condition is hopeful on this very account, because they expressly say if God should never hear me, it's my Duty to pray, and I will pray: let no depths hinder thee, but pray the rather, *Psal.* 130. 1. *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee O Lord.* And ver. 4th It follows, *But there is forgiveness with thee,* and ver. 7th *Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plentius redemption.* It should be observed, that where violent Temptations do most hurt, commonly these tempted persons will not be perswaded to pray, and such as continue to pray, do ordinarily obtain a comfortable victory.

7ly, Resolve also to wait on thy God, for at his Command the storm is soon changed in to a calm, *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,* *Psal.* 30. 5. A fixed resolution to wait on God, is both thy Duty, and will be a great advantage to thy soul, Remember *Ps.* 40. 1. *I waited patiently, and he brought me out of an horrible pit.* Give not way to sudden conclusions that thy hope is lost, and thou art cut off, as *Ezek.* 37. 11. make no unwarrantable prophecies that it will never be better with thee, if thou but resolve this on thing to wait, Satan shal be disappointed, whose great design is to have thee as desperate as himself; still leave place for the mercy and infinite power of God, *Encline your ear, come yet unto the Lord, hear and*

and your soul shal live, Isa. 55. 3. Let God have a hearing for shame, since Satans suggestions hath got so long hearing, God saith hearken to me, Satan saith hearken not to God, that thou mayest be another rebel to God as he is: but let thine Enemy know that thou hast an open ear for thy God. *I will hearken what God the Lord will speak unto me, for he will speak peace unto his people,* Psal. 85. 8. And if thou shalt say, Oh what can I hear? That will do good to me? No words can break Bars of Brass and Iron, I am Bound and in a Prison, yet nevertheless. stay until you hear who speaketh, and what he speaketh, Therefore Consider,

8ly, That if you will hearken, you shal hear of doing for you, which is more than Words, ye complain that ye are bound, and cannot shake off your Fetters; how then do ye like it to hear of one who is coming to open your Prison. Isa. 61. 1. *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.* Sure this is worth the hearing, that Christ hath it in commission to open such Prisons, and 2ly, That he is able to perform his Commission. For he openeth, and who can shut, Rev. 3. 7. and 3ly, That his Name is Faithful who bath this work to do, Rev. 19. 11. Look up then O Prisoner of hope, for Satan endeavours still to have thee looking down, desiring to have thee fall down at last where he is, he knoweth that long and stedfast looking into a frightening deep place, is apt to turn a man giddy, and thereby endangered to fall into the same depth, so his great care is that thou never turn thine eye upward, knowing that to be thy relief: therefore be not befooled by him, but look up and be saved, Isa. 45. 22. Say as Psal. 142. 7. *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy Name.*

9ly, Mind also that thine Adversary is still in Chains, and cannot go beyond Divine permission. *They are in chains of darkness,* 2 Pet. 2. 4. so also Jude ver. 6. *They are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* And so we see nothing could

be done by Satan against godly *Job*, but as Divine power ordered and over-ruled, *Job* 1. 12. And the Lord said unto *Satan*, behold all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand, & Chapter 2. ver. 6. And the Lord said unto *Satan*, behold he is in thine hand, but save his life. So thou art not at thy worst, absolutely under his Dominion, he is never out of the Chain; thou art still under the absolute Dominion of thy God, not an hair shall fall from thy head in this conflict, without a Divine Providence; keep the impression of this upon thy heart, for it is a grand design of the Tempter to have thee thinking, thou art now wholly in his hand without remedy, he will tempt thee to think that God taketh no care of thee, hath no pity on thee, and never regardeth thee, that so he may draw thee either to some dislike of God as mercilefs, or to deny that there is any Providence of God, and so carry thee on if he can to doubt if there be any God but himself, if he can drive thee to this, then his hellish design is far ripened, then he tempts thee to think thou must obey him, thou art wholly in his hand: I have heard some acknowledge this was their Temptation, but when Satan did drive hardest, he made but fools haste; for that Temptation became so frightening, that they were helped to hearken the less to any of his temptations, and so the Devils malice over-run his policy; the Lord discovering the wickedness of his devices: for when poor tempted souls are at the very brink of ruine, & knows not what to do but yield all to the Tempter, yet The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of Temptations, 2 Pet. 2: 9.

Know also, that though thy Temptations be very dreadful, yet while God helpeth thee to continue resisting them as an hateful burden, under which thou groans, then thou standest yet on God's side against his Enemy, thou fightest against these Temptations as God's Enemies, & thine, then God will be for thee. I am for thee, *Ezek* 36. 9, Faint not in his Service, he will not leave you alone, *Flag.* 2. 4. Be strong, for I am with thee, He will not see thee perish in his own cause fighting against his Enemies, he will send from above, and draw thee out of these depth

depths, though thine Adversary hath thrust sore at thee, that thou mightest fall, yet thou shalt have it to say, *But the Lord helped me*, *Psal. 118. 13.* And though thou be sore wounded in the time, yet he will tenderly bind up these wounds, *Psal. 147. 3.* Hold on the fight, and the Lord will teach thee to fight, *Psal. 144. 1.* He teacheth my fingers to fight, and ye shall fight because the Lord is with you, *Zechariah 10. 5.* Yielding is thy greatest danger.

117, Do not gratifie Temptations by allowing time to attend them, since thou art to pray that thou be not led into Temptation, then do not cast thy self into it by idleness, neglecting the Duties of thy Calling, set about thy Work, whether thy Station lead thee to employment of the Mind or Body, thou hast thy God and his service to wait upon, and has no time allowed thee to attend his enemies and their service, if thou give the tempter time he will give thee Work, he will strive to have thee so far engaged as to draw back from thy Duty to God and man, and attend what he hath to say; if thou yield to this he has too great Advantage: I know you are ready to retire from all company, and your ordinary Affairs, and say ye are not capable of business; but see that many of your retirements, be not rather to talk with the Tempter, than to talk with God; I acknowledge frequent Retirements for Prayer are most necessary, but then take care that the time be not worse spent, advert to this especially in the beginning of thy Temptations, that thou enter not the conflict with present sinning, by omitting of plain Duties to God, relations or others.

127, And that thou mayst have the benefit of Christ's coming to destroy the works of the Devil, *1 Joh. 3. 8.* And the comfortable hope that Satan who hath so bruised thee, shall be shortly trampled under thy feet, *Rom. 16. 20.* Esay yet once more to believe, and in believing thou shalt see the glory of God, *Joh. 11. 40.* When thou hast toiled and outwearied thy self seeking rest, yet thou shalt find it no where, but in Christ who inviteth thee to come and get rest to thy Soul, which he promiseth to give, *Matth. 11. 28.* Here must be the end and con-

conclusion, If thou desirest and expectest to enter into rest, for *Heb. 4. 3. We which have believed do enver into rest.* Labour then through the throng of all opposition & difficulties to adventure on believing in Christ, as himself commandeth, *Joh. 14. 1. Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.* Here is the true cure for a troubled heart, adventure on Christ's counsel, keep still by his Word, for it's the Sword of the Spirit.

I know some who were almost crushed under violent and most dangerous Temptations; in so much that friends were dejected, both because the Temptations were so strong that they could hardly be concealed, and a recovery more and more hopeless: but one day that person by the tender mercy of God begun to think; that ther's no mention in all the Scriptures of Christ's rejecting any poor Sinner coming to him for relief, whereupon forthwith that person resolved to Essay believing in Christ, whatsoever should follow; the Essay was no sooner made, but instantly the God of mercy gave a comfortable victory over all these Temptations, with encrease of Grace, and great joy attending the healing of these wounds; and yet continues of a Gospel becoming conversation, free of all these afflicting Bonds; This I can attest for truth from the persons own mouth the next day after God had broken these Bars of Brass, and Iron. And judge it Duty to publish it for the encouragement of poor tempted souls; that they may consider how signally our gracious God doth countenance such as in the very throng of Temptations, cast themselves and their burden upon the Lord.

*Quest.* But may I take any comfort in the hope that these frightening Suggestions and Temptations are not originally from my self, it's grievous that they should be in my thought at all, but much more, if I be the Author of them.

*Answer.* 1. It's certain that our selves are the Authors of many Temptations, *Jam. 1. 14. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

2ly, It's also clear, that Satan who is called the tempter, *Matth. 4. 3. Doth work upon mens own corruptions, and promoteth the wickedness of them, so that the lusts* of



of wicked men are said to be the lusts of the Devil, *Joh* 8. 44. *And the lusts of your father ye will do.* So he Improveth the prevalent Sins that men have the greatest propension unto, as the covetousness of *Judas*, and the excesses of mens passions, as grief to have them swallowed up with overmuch grief, *2 Cor.* 2. 7. *Lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow,* and *ver. 11.* *Lest satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.* And melancholy souls darkened with their own Imaginations give great advantage, to the Rulers of the darkness of this World.

3ly, But Temptations do sometimes arise only from Satan, as to their first original, and therefore he is called the tempter, *Matth.* 4. 3. Because it's his work to tempt, and therefore tempted where there could be no hope of prevailing as appeared in his tempting of Christ.

4ly, And because of our depraved natures, we are in danger of infection by these Temptations, that hath their source and first rise from Satan.

5ly, All Temptations to Evil should be resisted, whether we know the first spring from whence these Temptations flow or not, our work is to reject them whether they be our own, or mixt, with Satans Temptations, or his only.

6ly, Some of these Temptations that are immediately from Satan, are called the fiery Darts of the wicked One, *Eph.* 6. 16. So that the Dart cometh from the Devil, and not from the mans heart, they are called fiery Darts, being suddenly thrown in for setting all on Fire in the Soul, whereby there is such an unusual disturbance and surprising terrour, as if all were in a Flame, it being as death to them, finding such suggestions against God, and their own Salvation, as they never found before, and these so raging that they know not where or how to hide themselves from the fury of the Flame, these will be charged on Satans account, Considering,

First, That upon their very first appearing and assault, thou meetest them with hatred indignation and horror.

2ly, Though they continue sometime, yet they are no more

more welcome, than if Fireballs were thrown into thy House to burn thee and it up together, thou givest no consent to them.

3ly, As thou canst, thou resistest them.

4ly, Thou lookest up to God to deliver thee.

5ly, If they remove thou rejoycest.

6ly, Thou art so far from cherishing of them, that their returning is thy great fear.

7ly, And any wicked suggestion against the honour of God, is paining to thy soul.

These may help thee to understand, that such hellish blasphemous Temptations are the Darts and Sins of Satan.

*Obje<sup>ct</sup>.* Some say, they dare no more presume to go to the Lords Table : because when they did partake they are perswaded that they did eat and drink unworthily so that it's not only an unsuitable deportment that they have to bemoan as to their practice afterward, but conclude that when they did Receive, they did eat and drink Judgment to themselves; and therefore wish they had never Received, I heard some say, that they thought their Communicating was the greatest Sin they ever committed in their Life-time; but then they were overwhelmed with other temptations, so that this was said in an hour of Darknes.

*Ans<sup>wer</sup>.* Who can say, that they eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup so worthily, but that their failings are great in the very time of Receiving, for which if God would enter into Judgement they could not stand? What humble man dare say his apprehensions of a crucified Christ were so distinct as ought to have been? Or that his Faith and Love were acted to that degree required? Shal therefore the best of men on Earth, conclude that they did eat and drink unworthily, and so are guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, and leave his Table always with Anguish, rather than rejoycing in God their Saviour, do you not see this a Temptation, tending to the utter rejection of that blessed Ordinance of Christ?

2ly, Some of you who make this Objection, cannot deny

ny, but that you did make Conscience of serious Preparation, & that you desired with reverence & love to Receive Christ himself, when you did receive the visible Signs, only ye had not that measure of Faith and Love which you desired, the worst you have to charge your self with was your weakness, not Contempt, nor was it Ignorance, as to the discerning of Christ's Body: but because your graces were not so lively as they ought; I grant it's necessary to bemoan our Failings, but this is not the place of our perfection, when that cometh, we shal not need to Partake in such a manner as now, but while we are here, we must apply that precious Blood, for purging away the guilt we contract in our best actings, yea, in the very time of Communicating, we must apply Christ's Blood for the pardon of our Failings in Communicating; so that your better way were to go again to the Lords Table, and when you Receive, learn and practise that way of applying that precious Blood that cleanseth from all Sin, to cleanse you particularly from any sin you are guilty of by your weakness in Communicating.

3ly, And know, that there is a necessity of distinguishing between Sins of Infirmary, and Sins allowed: The Apostle Paul was constrain'd to make use of this distinction for his own comfort, when he saith Rom. 7: 15, *For that which I do, I allow not.*

4ly, But supposing it were as you Object, that you did once eat and drink unworthily, it doth not follow, that eternal Judgement shal be inevitable, albeit the Sin be repented of, for the clearing of this alittle, Consider, First, That it's granted, every sin deserveth Judgment, yea, eternal Judgment, and therefore, 2ly, This Sin of unworthy Communicating deserveth that Judgment. 3ly, The Apostle by Judgment here doth not understand only Eternal Judgment, for he speaketh plainly of temporal Judgments inflicted, for profanation of the Lords Supper, ver. 30. For this cause many are weak and Sickly among you, and many sleep, therefore he understandeth not only Eternal Judgment. 4ly, Some Partake of these temporal Judgments as chastenings, that they should not be condemned with the World. ver. 32. Yet these chasten-

chastening is for their sinful Communicating, then it followeth, that some who are sinful in their manner of Communicating, yet many obtain pardon, the Lord chastening them for not Communicating aright, that they may not be condemned with the World; Though they deserved Eternal Judgment by profaneing that holy Ordinance, yet by free grace they are forgiven, God in his tender mercy reserving room for Repentance.

Consider also, that the Pascheover was a Seal of the same Covenant of Grace, and great Sanctifying Preparation required for its Celebration, for every Partaker was to be sanctified unto the Lord, *2 Chron. 30. 17.* But some had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the Pascheover otherwise than it was written, *ver. 18.* But *Hezekiah* prayed for them, that the Lord would pardon such as prepared their hearts to seek God, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary, *ver. 19.* And the Lord hearkned to *Hezekiah*, and healed the people. *ver. 20.* Whereby we may see that sins of that Nature, are pardoned when sincerely acknowledged, and application made unto the tender mercies of God. The knowledge of this is necessary for some, who fear their condemnation is inevitable, because of their not Communicating aright; but by these Scriptures ye may see that all shall not be condemned who have been guilty by sins of that nature, where Repentance is, there is remission of sins by Christ, giving both together, *Acts 5. 31.*

## CH A P. X.

*Communicants obliged to review  
their Communicating.*

### The 9th Inference.

**T**HIS Ordinance being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, then, after Partaking, Communicants are obliged to try if they have obtained that blessed Communion.

Con-

Consider 1, *The Reasons why this should be tried*, and  
2. *A few helps how to perform it.*

All Communicants should seriously examine the way of their own hearts, when they did Partake, because,

*First*, It was our blessed Redeemer's way, after the first Celebration of this Sacrament, to set the Communicants in this Road of searching themselves, whether they did then believe or not, *Joh. 16. 31. Do ye now believe.* This was demanded of them, when they had but lately risen from the Lord's Table: and therefore is a question that Communicants ought to put to themselves, and obliged to have a ready Answer, as these Communicants had, which is the more to be noticed, that after they had declared their Faith, *ver. 30.* Yet *ver. 31.* Christ urgeth it again, that they may be deliberat, and know well what they say, when they say they believe.

*Secondly*, Our Communicating should be carefully reviewed, lest we did eat and drink unworthily: otherwise we shall be found despisers of that important warning, *1 Cor. 11. 27.* That such as eat and drink unworthily, are *guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.* Men have neither a due fear of the anger of God, nor regard to their own souls who having partaken, think there is no more to be done, not so much as to enquire whether they came from the Lord's Table guilty of his Body and Blood or not: for the best of men should take notice of the great regard God hath to Sealing Ordinances. The *First* thing we find Godly *Hezekiah* considering after the Celebration of the Passover, *2 Chron. 30. 18.* Is the transgression of the people, who did eat the Passover otherwise than it was Written, for whom he prayed, and the Lord mercifully answered his prayer.

*Thirdly*, If the pains thou did take in preparation before Partaking was sincere, that thou might have a blessed meeting with Christ, then the same principle will lead thee to enquire if he did meet with thy Soul: for no man can be said to be earnest for that which he will not so much as observe if it be found, if Communion with Christ was the desire of thy Soul, then it will be thy desire now

to be secured of it, that thou may'st say, I sought, and found him whom my soul loveth, Cant. 3, 4.

*Fourthly*, If thou shalt find after searching, that thou did obtain real spiritual Communion with Christ, this will make thy Thanksgivings sincere, this will be a mean to endear thy soul to Him, and increate thy Love, (which thou knowest hath need to be encreased) when thou has it to say, he came and manifested himself to thy Soul, did draw thee in to his Fellowship, fed thee with the hidden Manna, whereby thy Soul was revived; canst thou then but Love and seek to have thy heart enlarged for more Love? This will also endear thy heart to this holy Ordinance wherein thou found Him, this will make thee forward in seeking occasions for it hereafter, because there the Lord appeared unto thee. This will help thee to be a good example to others, who are negligent in seeking after it; this will be a mean to endear to thee the Promises, to thee the Lord promised to come and bless his people, where he recorded his Name, thou has found it even as he hath said, his Words be true, now thou knowest it to be a meer Temptation to doubt of his Promise, or think that it faileth, now thou canst say, I will no more distrust any offer that Christ maketh of himself to a poor Sinner, for as he offered, so I did embrace and am not disappointed; now thou canst Sing by experience, as Psal. 33. 21. *For our heart shall rejoyce in him, because we have trusted in his holy Name.* Be perswaded then, of the clearness and necessity of this Duty, to review thy work at the Lord's Table, that thou may'st know what to conclude of thy self, whether thou may'st safely take comfort to thy Soul, as a sincere and accepted Communicant or not: for a mistake here is dangerous: if on the one hand thou judge thy self a worthy Communicant, and thy self but a stranger to Christ, this will harden thy heart in Sin, and render thee obstinate against all necessary admonition, and reproof, and thus you may go on adding to your guilt at every Communion, and remain impenitent; ye, thinking it improper for you to repent for any sinful Communicating, on the other hand, it's also dangerous for you to conclude your selves unworthy Com-

Communicants without sure grounds, or ever searching into the matter: for thus you may deny the grace freely given you, and belie the operations of the holy Ghost, and thus ye may deny God the glory due to him for his mercies, and cast your own souls into perplexing diquiet and bondage: therefore there is much need to be guided of God in this Search.

And for the clearing of this a little: we are to Consider, both how it was with our Souls in the time of Communicating, and with what impressions and help, we come from that work, as for our work in the time of that Solemnity, albeit by the Word of God it may be declared how Communicants should act, and if they have so acted, then they are not unworthy Communicants; yet no man can discover the internal acts of other mens souls whether they have acted as they should or not; none can know that but God, and mens own consciences: Therefore when ye are to try your sincerity at the Lords Table, the Word of God must be your Rule, the spirit of God your Guide, and your own Conscience a Witness; for the utmost that can be said by men is Conditional, that is if you have acted suitable to the nature of the Work, if you have embraced Christ, &c. Then you are accepted and not unworthy Communicants. 2. VVhen Communicants are trying whether they have Communicated acceptably, or Unworthily; they must distinguish between their being helped to perform the Substance of the work then required, and having their Graces revived and elevated by the shining of God's Face upon them; because a Believer may sincerely receive Christ Offered to him in the Sacrament when there is not such lifting up of God's Countenance upon him as at other times, a Believer may be under some deserved rebuke even at the Lord's Table, and yet he cleaveth to Christ, though hiding his face, and affectionatly Embraceth Him, though his affections be not raised to that hight that they have been and should be. 3. There is great need of wisdom from God, how to Judge of the passions of mens souls in time of Communicating; for some men may have great flashes of Grief, or joy, at such times, who know no

such thing at other times, or if they should be so at other times, yet no better than the weeping of an *Esau*, or the joy of an Hypocrite which soon perisheth : others again at the same work may have true Godly sorrowing, melting down their hearts before the Lord in the Sense of their sin ; and sometimes the Joy of the Lord's true Spiritual comfort replenishing their souls, so that they find it unspeakable, and these elevated affections having a sincere Root, flowing from indignation at sin or Love to Christ are most desireable ; so that it should or will be painful to a Believer if he find not some gale of affections ; suitable in some measure to the love he is receiving, and publishing at the Lord's Table : nor will it abate his regard to these due affections, that an Hypocrite may have the Counterfit of them.

*Fourthly*, Such Believers as doubt of their acceptance at the Lord's Table ( which doubt doth often arise from people not being comforted at that time, or the low-ness of their graces not acting vigourously when they were Partaking ) such Communicants I say, for preventing of disponding disquiet of mind, must in Reviewing their work. Consider if that which was indispensably necessary was performed, that is the souls receiving of Christ as He is offered in the Gospel, and offereth Himself to His people in that Ordinance, if the heart was opened for Him, and He embraced ; then the most Substantial part of the VVork was performed : though there be Cause to Mourn that the affections were so low at such enriching and Honourable work, yet Bless God if thou wast enabled to Joyn thy self to the Lord : for the Ordinance is not profaned ; and though thou wast a weak, yet not an unworthy Communicant. It may also contribute to thy Comfort, if when thou comest from the Lord's Table thou findest in thy Soul. *First* an Inclination to Praise and Exalt thy Redeemer, and for this particularly that He did not utterly forsake thy soul, as thou knowest was deserved ; and though thou had a Rebuke by the hiding of His Face as to thy Comfort, yet thou submits to it and does not cease to love Him, knowing that He can make a Blessing of that frown, to render



render thee more humble and diligent for the time to come. 2. If thou find a desire to hold fast what thou hast received: Thou art so far from having done with Christ, when thou has done at the Table, that thy heart cleaveth close to Him; and so much the more if thou had any fear of His anger by withdrawing of His Comfort; if thou canst not stay from Him, but must have some renewed Testimony of His Love, fear of His anger being too heavy for thee to bear, *Job* 10: 2. *Psal.* 80. 7.

*Thirdly*, When thou comes from the Lord's Table thou findest upon thy heart a fear of sinning, that thy Lord be not provoked more; and this fear is of any manner of sinning, so that there is no Trial or trouble thou fearest so much as sin, and so much the more because thou thinkest thy sin hath provoked thy God already, thy indignation is now raised against all sin as thy greatest Enemy, making thee long to be Delivered from Root and Branch of it, *Rom.* 7. 24.

*Fourthly*, If this thy Indignation at sin, be Testified by thy watching against it, and all Temptations leading to it, though it were as Plucking out of the Right Eye, if thou find thy heart Purified, then thou has the Faith of God's Elect, the cleansing Vertue of Christ's Blood hath reached thy Soul, for nothing else could do it, *1 Peter* 1. 19, 22.

*Fifthly*, If thou comest from the Lord's Table with this fixed on thy heart, that from henceforth whatever come in thy way, thou wilt Believe, let the Difficulty be never so far above thy Strength, thou wilt Honour thy Redeemer by Trusting Him with any thing without exception; thou has now Professed thy self a Believer, before Angels and men, and by Grace thou wilt act as becometh a Believer: thou fearest sin, thou fearest Temptations, thou wants not fear, that the Burden of some Trials is ready to breake thy Back: but now thou dare fear none of them with a faithless fainting fear, knowing thy Redeemer is Strong, and that thou art Solemnly Engaged to Trust Him at all times. If this be the fruit of thy Communicating, then the Bond

of the Covenant hath bound thy heart to thy Lord, then thy heart beareth the Impression of His Seal, *Psal.* 52. 8.

*Sixthly*, Since thou came from the Lord's Supper; observe what Gracious alterations are to be found in thy Soul and Practice that were not found before: what thou can find of that exceeding great and Mighty Power, whereby the Lord worketh in them that believe, if thou has not only brought Godly resolutions from that Ordinance, but vertue and power, if thou can observe more of the Spirit of Power in thy Duties, if there be any observable new spring that decayed Graces are revived, if thy sin be languishing, and Grace flourishing, if whatever Holy work thou art Engaged, in some vigour Life and strength appeareth thou art not now desiring to shift clear Duties, thy heart and thy work go now together, which often before were far asunder; thou now takest delight in doing thy Lord's Will, thou can run now and not weary as formerly; if this be found, then the Lord hath abundantly Blessed thy Provision, thy Meat hath been thy Blessing, and thou mayest now find it even as Christ said, *His flesh Meat indeed, and His Blood Drink indeed.*

I shal add but one word more to such, as still fear they did not Communicate acceptably even as to the very Substance of the work, and cannot say they Believed when they did Partake.

*Ans.* This Fear is very afflicting; but some who find not comfort at a Communion are so cast down, and so disturbed in their apprehensions, concluding the Lord hath deserted them; that they can see nothing for their Comfort, and sometimes refuse to be comforted; having a strange kind of pleasure to harden themselves in sorrow, though they did Believe in the time of Partaking; yet now they have not an eye to see it. No wonder the Lord be sparing of His comforts to some people who so dote upon them, that the help of Grace is not so much valued; if they want Comfort: be not so proud as to think ye deserve Comfort, nor so ignorant as to think the Lord is not free to dispense Consolations when He seeth

feeth fit, but not when ye think it fit; and learn to value the help of Grace more than Comfort by it self, joy without Grace will deceive thee, therefore search yet if any sincerity can be found in thy Communicating, that thou mayest humbly and thankfully acknowledge it to His Praise.

*Secondly*, If after thou hast again tryed it; yet thou canst find no Faith in thy Communicating, thou art then to try if ever before that time thou didst sincerely Believe in Christ, receiving Him as thy Redeemer and Lord, for if it was so, the Union then made can never be Dissolved, *For he that Believeth hath everlasting Life*, John 3. 36. And by this Union, thou has an Interest in Grace to make thee Repent for sinful Communicating *Acts* 5. 31.

*Thirdly*, If neither before Partaking, nor in the time, thou couldst say thou ever Believed: Yet if thou shalt now Believe thou shalt be Saved, *Acts* 16. 31. VVhat ever hath been thy Guilt, the Blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.

## CHAP. XI.

*Communicants should Live suitable to such Holy Communion.*

The tenth Inference,

**T**HIS Holy Ordinance being the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood: then Communicants are Obliged to Live suitable to so great a Benefit, and testifie their Gratitude, by a Holy Walk and Conversation.

The last thing to be Considered is, that after Examination of our way in Communicating, if we did truly Partake the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood; we are to endeavour a Practice suitable thereunto: &c in order to this Holiness of heart and Conversation.

*I shall put you in mind of these four things.*

*First,*

- First, A brief hint of that Conversation required.
2. That our performance should be early begun.
  3. That Engagements and Vows be particularly performed.
  4. That for Strengthening to the whole Work required, our begun Communion with God be cherished and continued in that Holy walk which God hath Prescribed.

*For the first, the Conversation required of us is,*

First, To be blameless in all things, Phil. 2. 15. *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke.* Stains on Communicants doth much obstruct the Progress of Religion and true Godliness; it should grieve us much to be a Comfort to the wicked in their wickedness, Ezekiel 16. 54.

2. In a particular manner, our Conversation should be Just and Conscientious, *Israelites indeed in whom is no guile.* 1 Thessalonians 4. 6. *That no man go beyond, and defraud his brother in any matter;* It's true Godly men will be reproached by the wicked carry as they will; but then be sure their Accusations be false that so they may be ashamed, 1 Peter 3. 16. It's a most wounding reflection on Religion, if an ordinary Communicant shal be found in unjust Practices.

3. Our Conversation should be meek and lowly, this being a Bright Ray of Christ's Image, which He requires us to learn of Him, *Matth. 11. 29.* It's the very best Ornament of a Christian that all should be clothed with, though it be most difficult to proud nature yet must be Learned, otherwise God will look upon us as far off; but He dwelleth with the humble, *Isaiah 57. 15.* His dwelling with such should suffice to make us Love it.

4. Believers must walk Circumspectly, and be watchful in all things, *Ephesians 5. 15.* Sins within us and temptations from without are never wanting move where we will in this World; Therefore we must be always on our Guard, which was Christ's Solemn Counsel, *Mark 13. 37.* *What I say unto you, I say unto you all, Watch.* We cannot spend a Day nor an hour of a day, without sin and loss to our Souls if this Direction be not followed, our unwatchful hours being many woes for

for many days which we cannot shake off; but the watchful Christian is the Blessed Servant in Christs account, *Luke 12. 37.*

5. Our Conversation should be ordered and designed for Edification, *Rom. 15. 2. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification:* We must not say with *Cain, am I my brothers keeper:* we are required to do good to all men as we have Opportunity, *Galatians 6. 10.* What a bitter farewell to the World shal that man have, who when he must go hence hath that to take to the grave with him; Here is a man leaving the World, who never did good but hurt to the Souls of men whom he leaveth behind him.

6. Our Conversation should favour of Communion with God, and Spiritual heavenly things. *Phil. 3. 20. Our Conversation is in Heaven.* VVe should learn to be more as Strangers on Earth, thinking and speaking more of our Better Countrey, and Comforting one another with the Hope of it, *1 Thessalonians 4. 18.* we have no cause to be ashamed of our Countrey, it's well if it be not ashamed of us; yet many of us now a days appear ashamed to speak of Heaven or heavenly things, lest we be thought either too Religious, or Hypocrites; but the matter is that Heavenly Meditations and Affections abound not in our hearts, and therefore the mouth speaketh so little of them.

7. Our walk should be suitable to Gospel Promises and Priviledges, that the VWorld may see neither our Hope nor Portion is in this Life: the Believers Inheritance shall be for ever, *Psal. 37. 18.* And therefore ought not to be cast down with worldly Losses, but learn to be Content in every State, knowing how to be abassed and how to abound; the Believer should Rejoyce in Hope of the Glory of God, knowing that he shal be shortly above all the griefs and Comforts that this VWorld can give; and therefore should go through his Journey cheerfully, in Hope that he shal soon Rest from his Labours, and desire nothing but what he shal Possess. *Hebrews 4. 3.*

These are a part of the ways that thou art Engadged to

to walk in having taken the Seal of God's Covenant : thou art in a special manner Bound to all the Duties therein required, but thy Comfort is that the same Covenant alloweth thee help to perform, and He whom thou hast Received, hath all the fulness of the God-head in him, *Colossians 2. 9. John 1. 16.*

2. Enter thy work early to pay thy Vows, lest thou forget them and so render thy Guilt great, lest the present sense of thy Obligations go off thy heart ; defer not a day, for many Christians come to loss after Communion by trifling away time, until the Edge go off, and their hearts are cooled again, and so much cooled that they are nothing like what they were, *when their hearts burned within them in Communion with Christ*, these Disciples mentioned *Luke 24. 32.* were wise in this that they Improved the Season of their Mercy, feeling their hearts to burn within them they would not part with Christ, but *verses 28. and 29.* Albeit He made as though He would go away, *they constrained him to stay with them.* unto which He Graciously yielded approving their Diligence to have their Mercy continued ; *Keep your selves in the love of God, Jude 21.* And remember that these Disciples who fell asleep presently after Communicating, the next thing we hear of them was forsaking their Master.

3. As thou art to begin thy work early, so Engage in it Effectually and particularly to follow the Lord fully ; Remember before thou came to the Lord's Table, when thou was Examining thy heart and Practice, how many sins then appeared and how Hainous, inso much that thou thought it hard for thee to approach the Lords Table lest thou should profane it, and durst not resolve on Partaking until thou hadst resolved and Engadged against such and such particular sins, as for Instance thy pride and seeking of vain glory to thy self, polluting lusts, over reaching of the simple, wasting of time in company without necessary occasion, thy being often ashamed of thy Lord's Words, rather complying with, than rebuking of evil, thy offensive passions, treading at thy Lot, thy fainting in time of Trial, thy earthliness of mind, thy

thy frequent neglecting of Prayer, thy lukewarmness in it; thy neglect of Meditation on the state of thy Soul, thy wearying of Sabbaths or the Holy Duties then required, thy Ingratitude for many signal Deliverances and Mercies, thy being unprofitful either to the Souls or Bodies of thy Relations, or to the Poor, the bad example thou often givest to thy Family, and the like sins, if all these or any such evil were wounding to thy Conscience, acknowledged to God, Lamented and Engadged against, as in the sight of God when no Mortal eye was witness, and with this Engadgment on thy Conscience to Reform thy ways, to endeavour all Duty, and cast away all thy Transgressions by the help of Grace, if thus thou came to the Lords Table, and there Solemnly Renewed thy Covenant with God, *avouching Him that day to be the Lord thy God, and to walk in his ways*, Deut 26. 17. And in Testimony of thy Consent to all the Articles of the Covenant of Grace, didst receive the Lord's publick Gospel Seal? then know that God will call thee to account for thy observation of this Covenant, take care lest thou be Charged as these, Psal. 78. 36. *Newertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant.* Take heed ye be not as these who said they would not Transgress; and yet are found wandering from God and playing the Harlot every where, *Jeremiah 2. 20.* And that ye may be stedfast in your Covenant with God, and faithfully performing your Vows, that ye may shine more and and more bright unto the perest Day, and continue that Blessed Communion with Christ which is begun. Resolve on a true walk with God: this honourable Walk is often mentioned, and diverse ways expressed in Scripture; whereby the Lord Condescendeth to our weakness for our good, that we may the better understand how to manadge this Walk. as

*First, Walk in Him. Col. 2. 6. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* What a wonderful walk is this, to walk in Christ! who can understand this if it be not given from above? yet they  
are

are the Words of God discovering our Duty, our Priviledge and our greatest Help for this Holy Walk.

1. Our Duty still to abide in Christ, never to go from Him, to any hand, to have all our way consisting with Communion with Christ, to admit willingly of nothing, but that which He will admit of in fellowship with Him ; that so our fellowship may be continued. 2. Our Priviledge in partaking of so great Happiness as to be Interested in His Favour, His love and care ; and Blessed with such nearness as to have Him for our Habitation, where we may live and walk at a Holy Liberty. 3. Here is our greatest Help, and the very Fountain of it, if all ordinary Cisterns were dried up, the Believer shal Live by the Fountain itself, because Christ Lives, he who is in Him shal Live also : the Believer Liveth upon Christ and His Fullness, there he hath Grace to make him Love this Holy walk, and hold up his goings in it.

2. Walk with God. Micah 6. 8. *Walk humbly with thy God.* Let none be so profane as to say are not these one ? to walk in Him, and to walk with Him . and what need is there for Expressing this walk so many ways, for they are the Words of God and therefore all to be Regarded. This walking with God is a Testimony and Proof, of our being agreed with Him ; otherwise there could be no walking with Him : For He *putteth away all the wicked like dross*, Psal. 119. 119. The Lord confereth this honour upon Believers, that being now reconciled by the Blood of Christ, they may draw near with some Holy confidence, and without Presumption walk with their God : though it must be Humbly ; because He is God, and we but dust : nor is it possible to keep up this walk without Humility, for the proud in heart are an Abomination to Him : and the rareness of true humility maketh this walk so rare. 2. It's to walk with God, that is in His way, not in our ways ; we must attend Him in His own ways, not expecting to walk with Him in our sinful ways : this is the more to be regarded, because we would willingly have God to be with us in our own way, to owne and countenance us, in the way of our



our own chusing; when there is little care taken to be with God in his ways, but we cannot walk with Him out of His own way; and as we would have Him to be with us, so we should take care that we be with Him, 2 Chr. 19. 2. *The Lord is with you while ye be with Him.*

3. Walk before me, Gen. 17. 1. *I am God Almighty, walk before Me and be thou perfect.* 1. To walk as being under Gods all-seeing Eye, which is a great help to a Holy walk, labouring to do nothing but as being content God behold it, setting the Lord always before our eyes, or as the Apostle expresseth it, I forsook the Lord always before my face, Acts 21. 22. Blessed is the man who frameth all his way for that Omniscient Eye. 2. To walk before Him, is not only to be impressed with His discerning, all our ways; but to set Him before our eyes as our all sufficient God and help; Believing in our hearts that He can strengthen, and bear us up in all the difficult steps of our walk. 3. To walk before Him or before His face, is to Encourage the Believer that not only God can help; but that His Eyes Mercifully upon His People, observing all their necessities and weakness, and the need they have that His Gracious Power be forth-coming to them; He hath them still before His Face or Eyes: all which are strengthening for this Holy walk, and keeping up Communion with God, yea this walking before Him in a Believing manner, is the way to bring us nearest unto Perfection; walk before me and be thou perfect: and this should be the Study of every Believer, to be always making Progress toward Perfection; the very endeavouring of it is also a great help to this Holy walk.

4. We are to walk after God, Deut. 10. 4. *Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him.* This walking after Him is; that we may not mistake our selves, by forgetting our due distance, but understand that no Dignity, no Priviledge, no Intimacy granted should make us forget what He is, and what we are: it's the Honour of His dearest Children to be His Followers, Eph. 5. 1. 2dly. We are hereby instructed that walking after Him, is to fear Him and keep His Commands; this must be in every step of

our walk, no pretence of a good Design, no Invention of our own without His Command; will agree with this walk. 3. When the Believer is admitted into true Fellowship with God, yet he is to follow on for greater nearness, and at the nearest in this Life, is to follow for more; and the more near there is still the more of these Infinite Excellencies Discovered; that maketh the Believer's Communion with God still a following after Him. Phil. 3. 12. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after.*

5. We must walk as Christ walked 1 John 2. 6. *He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked:* we must not shut our eyes, upon the Holiness of this walk required in this Scripture, and must not throw it by, saying it's impossible for us to imitate Christ, O that prejudice against the holiness of this walk, did not more obstruct our Imitation, than that Christ's Practice was in many things Unimitable: for though it be true that no man is foolishly to presume an Imitation in all things, or to attempt pure impossibilities, yet it's no less true that we are Obligated to learn by Christ's Practice and Example, wherein He is imitable. For Matth. 11. 29. He requires us to Learn of Him, for saith He, *I am meek and lowly in heart.* The Command is to learn by His Example; there is the greater cause to Regard this, because no man can Love Him, and not desire to be like Him, so far as is imitable, in hope to be more like Him ere long when He shall appear. 1 John. 3. 2. Consider then O Christian His Diligence still going about doing good, His not seeking His own Glory as a man, His patience both towards His friends and foes His Humilitie and Meekness; His Submission to His Father's Will, His Diligence in Prayer, sometimes continuing all Night Praying, as Luke 6. 12. How much should it sweeten any Duty that Christ Practised it before us; get this necessary Imitation once upon your Conscience as a Duty John 13. 15 *Do as I have given you Example;* here is a Pattern that cannot deceive, as the best of sinful men may do. Therefore follow

follow no man further than he is a Follower of Christ

1 Corinthians 11. 1.

6. Walk worthy of God 1 Thess. 2. 12. That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His Kingdom and Glory. These also are the Words of God, and must be regarded whatever difficulty appear in them; the Believer must Study a suitableness to the Relation God has honoured him with. 1 John. 3. 2. Now are we the sons of God, Believers must represent this Relation by the shining of their Father's Image upon them: There are some of whom He is not ashamed to be called their God Heb. 11. 13. Walk suitable to your Engagements, many eyes are upon you, and your Conversation will be sure either to do good, or hurt to others; let no man converse with you but so as he may have occasion for some good to his Soul, let never poor Creature have cause of complaint, that you hardened them in their sin, and pushed them on to Hell; walk suitable to thy hope of that Kingdom and Glory whereunto thou art called, walk as it becomes an Heir of that Kingdom neither cast down, nor lifted up with any thing that a little time shal consume; labour to walk carefully, as an expectant of Heaven hoping shortly to be in it, with thy best Company: and that thou mayest get these things in some measure cheerfully performed.

First, Seek to be Confirmed that thy fellowship with God is begun.

2. Adore the Mercy that ever brought thee so near Him.
3. Mind often what is revealed of the Glorious eternal Communion to come.
4. See that Love constrain thee to keep still near God.
5. Watch, and oppose whatever allureth thy heart from this fellowship.
6. Yet Commit the keeping of thy Soul into the hands of thy Redeemer.
7. Trust Him with every thing thou hast to do.
8. Seek to delight in Him as thy exceeding Joy, in all Resolutions Publick or Privat.
9. Meditate on thy Mercies, as well as either thy sin or wants.

10. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby he dwelleth in thee, and Sealeth thee.

11. Lay out thy Graces or Gifts for the Master's use, and so they will grow.

12. Labour to know better what a Conversation in Heaven is, that thou mayest be daily drawing out of Heaven, that which will help thee to it, that which will sweeten all the severities of the way to thy Home, and these First Fruits that will secure it to be thy Home; and make thee desire that better Countrey; and while thou art here, draw out of Christ's fulness with Joy, abide in Him who purchased that Inheritance, and hath prepared it for thee, and is the way to it, and shall receive thee to Himself, when thy walk is over, and place thee with Himself in His Father's Kingdom, whence thou shalt go no more out, nor ever desire to be out.




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